The Maoist Internationalist Movement

On Colonialism, Imperialism And Revolutionary Strategy

Organization for
LOOP

The Maoist Internationalist Movement on Colonialism, Imperialism, and Revolutionary Strategy

This pamphlet is produced and published by LOOP,
the Organization for the Liberation of Oppressed Peoples,
an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist solidarity organization.

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Introduction

LOOP

The Organization for the Liberation of Oppressed Peoples (LOOP) here republishes a selection of documents from the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM), an anti-imperialist Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization that emerged from prisoner solidarity and internationalist anti-apartheid work in the 1980s, going on to operate for over twenty years in the belly of the beast.

MIM's theoretical innovations were a significant contribution to the political economy of imperialism – and the development of a communist political practice based on that analysis. Against the settler stream of the American left, MIM's politics were based on a commitment to the liberation of oppressed nations within and without the United States. MIM did not flinch from analyzing the white working class in the American settler colony as a *settler* working class – the working class of the *oppressor nation* – and its existence as a privileged labor aristocracy distinct from the proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world. Distinguishing themselves from virtually all Marxist organizations seeking a "decolonization" only on settler terms, MIM not only upheld the right of Native nations to self-determination, but also the right of the colonized to expel the colonizer from their homelands.

Despite its importance and insight, much of MIM's body of work remains understudied. While LOOP does not agree with every jot or tittle in these essays, they remain – even decades later – a cut above the staid and delusory writings of the First Worldist left.

In selecting what articles to include, LOOP did not include pieces from the reformatted versions of *MIM Theory* 1 and 2/3, or from the various Study Packs available on the MIM(Prisons) website, all of which are essential reading. In a certain sense, this collection is a *personal* one – these are articles that we have found significant to our own political development and organizing experience. We hope our republication of these essays helps them find a wider audience, bringing to them more of the attention they deserve, and that their insights are brought to bear on the burning questions of our movement.

MIM's prisoner support work is now continued by the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons. MIM(Prisons) has also produced a substantial body of essential writing. You can find more information about MIM(Prisons) at https://www.prisoncensorship.info/. MIM(Prisons) maintains the archive of MIM's former website, the source used for the text of these essays, which can be found at https://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/.

What is MIM?

MIM | 2001

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) is the collection of existing or emerging Maoist internationalist parties in the English-speaking imperialist countries and their English-speaking internal semi-colonies, as well as the existing or emerging Maoist Internationalist parties in Belgium, France and Quebec and the existing or emerging Spanish-speaking Maoist Internationalist parties of Aztlan, Puerto Rico and other territories of the U.$. Empire. *MIM Notes* is the newspaper of MIM. MIM upholds the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. MIM struggles to end the oppression of all groups over other groups: classes, genders, nations. MIM knows this is only possibly by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. Revolution is a reality for North America as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony. MIM differs from other communist parties on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the communist party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in humyn history. (3) As Marx, Engels and Lenin formulated and MIM has reiterated through materialist analysis, imperialism extracts super-profits from the Third World and in part uses this wealth to buy off whole populations of oppressor nation so-called workers. These so-called workers bought off by imperialism form a new petty-bourgeoisie called the labor aristocracy. These classes are not the principal vehicles to advance Maoism within those countries because their standards of living depend on imperialism. At this time, imperialist super-profits create this situation in the Canada, Quebec, the United $tates, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Israel, Sweden and Denmark. MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principles and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

Program of the Maoist Internationalist Movement

MIM | 1996

WHAT WE WANT
WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. We want communism.

We believe that communism is the elimination of all oppression – the power of groups over other groups. This includes national oppression, class oppression, and gender oppression.

2. We want socialism.

We believe that socialism is the path to communism. We believe that the current dictatorship of the bourgeoisie oppresses the world's majority. We believe that socialism – the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry – is a necessary step towards a world without inequality or dictatorship – a communist world. We uphold the USSR under Lenin and Stalin (1917-1953) and China under Mao (1949- 1976) as models in this regard.

3. We want revolutionary armed struggle.

We believe that the oppressors will not give up their power without a fight. Ending oppression is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. We believe, however, that armed struggle in the imperialist countries is a serious strategic mistake until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless. Revolution will become a reality for North America as the U.S. military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

> We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun. – Mao Zedong

4. We want organization.

We believe that democratic-centralism, the system of unified application of majority decisions, is necessary to defeat the oppressors. This system includes organization, leadership, discipline and hierarchy. The oppressors use these weapons, and we should, too.

By building a disciplined revolutionary communist vanguard party, we follow in the tradition of comrades Lenin, Mao and Huey Newton.

5. We want independent institutions of and for the oppressed.

We believe that the oppressed need independent media to build public opinion for socialist revolution. We believe that the oppressed need independent institutions to provide land, bread, housing, education, medical care, clothing, justice and peace. We believe that the best independent institution of all is a self-reliant socialist government.

6. We want continuous revolution.

We believe that class struggle continues under socialism. We believe that under socialism, the danger exists for a new bourgeoisie to arise within the communist party itself. We believe that these new oppressors will restore capitalism unless they are stopped. We believe that the bourgeoisie seized power in the USSR after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. We believe that China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is the farthest advance towards communism in human history, because it mobilized millions of people against the restoration of capitalism.

7. We want a united front against imperialism.

We believe that the imperialists are currently waging a hot war – a World War III – against the world's oppressed nations, including the U.S. empire's internal colonies. We seek to unite all who can be united under proletarian and feminist leadership against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy.

We believe that the imperialist-country working classes are primarily a pro-imperialist labor aristocracy at this time. Likewise, we believe that the biological-wimmin of the imperialist countries are primarily a gender aristocracy. Thus, while we recruit individuals from these and other reactionary groups to work against their class, national and gender interests, we do not seek strategic unity with them. In fact, we believe that the imperialist-country working-classes and imperialist-country biological-wimmin, like the bourgeoisies and petit-bourgeoisies, owe reparations to the international proletariat and peasantry. As such, one of the first strategic steps MIM will take upon winning state power will be to open the borders.

We believe that socialism in the imperialist countries will require the dictatorship of the international proletariat and that the imperialist-country working-classes will need to be on the receiving end of this dictatorship.

8. We want New Democracy for the oppressed nations. We want power for the oppressed nations to determine their destinies.

We believe that oppressed people will not be free until they are able to determine their destinies. We look forward to the day when oppressed people will live without imperialist police terror and will learn to speak their mind without fear of the consequences from the oppressor. When this day comes, meaningful plebiscites can be held in which the peoples will decide for themselves if they want their own separate nation-states or some other arrangement.

9. We want world revolution.

We believe it is our duty to support Marxism-Leninism-Maoism everywhere, though our principal task is to build public opinion and independent institutions in preparation for Maoist revolution in North America. The imperialists think and act globally – we must do the same.

10. We want politics in command.

We believe that correct tactics flow from correct strategies, which flow from a correct ideological and political line. We believe that the fight against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy goes hand-in-hand with the fight against revisionism, chauvinism, and opportunism.

> The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power. – Mao Zedong

You Want Global "Free Trade"? Give Us Global Labor Standards, a Global Minimum Wage!

MIM 4 | 18 April 2001

We often hear the corporate shills promoting agreements like NAFTA, GATT, and now the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) complain about barriers to the free movement of investments and profits.

But we rarely hear them complain about barriers to the free movement of labor (i.e. people).

This is because monopoly corporations – and the privilege enjoyed by First World countries generally – depend on the depressed wages in Third World countries.

Workers in the Third World earn an average of $0.48 an hour, while u.$. workers earn $16.40.[1] How is this possible? Those Third World workers live under death-squad governments, which use force to set wage rates and attack union organizers.

Those regimes which do not use military force are competing against those which do – and they face the threat of covert and overt military aggression. Witness U.S. sponsored coups or invasions in Iran, Guatemala, Vietnam, Chile, etc.

So if the big capitalists are going to clamor for a WTO to protect their "free market" – never mind that the "free market" is dominated by First World monopolies and the WTO is controlled by a few bullies like the united $tates – we should demand WTO-like protections on a global, free, fair labor market.

Professor Voradvidh from Thailand has it right: "We need a GATT on labor conditions and on the minimum wage, we need a standard on the minimum conditions for work and a higher standard for children."[2] Countries that use death squads against union organizers should face severe trade penalties. Unions seeking to obtain wages higher than minimum wage should get to go before a WTO-like body.

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[1] *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997*, Section C.6.

[2] William Greider, *One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1997.

Savvy corporate figureheads are already trying to fool us that they are doing something about the real goals of the international proletariat. The former Clinton Administration bragged, "[We have] sought establish a framework for multilateral discussion on how best to promote core labor standards: freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, nondiscrimination in the workplace, prohibition of forced labor, and elimination of exploitative child labor."[3]

This is all smoke and mirrors – but that just means that we have to expose these charlatan's schemes and continue to press for real global protections for workers. We shouldn't cede the field to the imperialists – we should hoist them on their own rhetoric. Militant action recently embarrassed multi-national drug companies to lower their prices for AIDS drugs.[4] We can do the same on the issue of a global minimum wage, protection for union organizers, and the like.

Of course, a global minimum wage and other guarantees for a "free and fair" labor market are reforms within a capitalist system, currently dominated by big monopoly capital from the First World, a.k.a. imperialism. The Maoist Internationalist Movement believes a revolutionary struggle for socialism – where people's needs are placed first and individual profit comes last or never – is necessary step to eliminate exploitation and related the evils of poverty, disease, and starvation which kill millions every year.

Anti-imperialist struggle with a socialist perspective in Third World countries can in one fell blow remove those countries from the dictates of First World monopoly capital and all its institutions: The IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc. The best thing we can do here is prepare to topple Amerikan imperialism when the time is right – and make sure it never arises again.

That said, global regulations on labor conditions are a progressive reform struggle. For hundreds of millions of toilers a wage hike can mean the difference between life and death. And, although global labor-market regulations are consistent with capitalism, they undermine the principal prop of modern capitalism: The super-profits sucked out of the Third World.

[3] *Economic Report of the President*, Chapter 7, 1997.
[4] *MIM Notes 233*, 1 May 2001.

Avoid Amerikan Protectionism – Let Sleeping Fascists Lie

MIM 4 | 18 April 2001

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM) agrees with many of the specific calls raised by the organizers of the April 21st Border Action, such as shutting down sweatshops, ending the exploitation of peasants and farmworkers, preventing Amerika from pillaging Mexico's natural resources, etc.[1] We do not, however, raise the call "Stop the Free Trade Area of the Americas," for several reasons.

MIM opposes imperialism generally. Many of the problems opponents of the FTAA, NAFTA, neoliberalism, privatization point out are in fact symptoms of imperialism. The commodification of labor, depressed wages, and destruction of the environment predated these policies. Overturning them might mean a shift in the balance of forces and a return to a "new deal" type of social democracy in Amerika – but super-exploitation and other problems built into the capitalist system like monumental waste would continue.

But this is not just a matter of reform versus revolution. We know that reforms – partial demands which can be won under capitalism – are necessary and useful. The question is, what use do we make of reforms?[2]

So what does a positive reform look like at this historical moment of imperialism? Some said for example that the United $tates should not join NAFTA, because free trade means the abolition or nonenforcement of laws protecting the environment. In 1991, under GATT, Mexico fought the United $tates and won the right to sell tuna to the United $tates that Mexican fishers obtained while killing dolphins in their nets. The U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act had banned tuna fishing that could endanger dolphins.[3] For reasons of this sort, MIM was told we should oppose GATT and NAFTA and take up economic nationalism. At best, the reasoning is that it is easier to fight for progressive laws inside one country.

MIM believes that kind of reasoning leads to sharper contradictions between imperialist powers and more wars – many bound to be fought by proxy in the colonies. If Mexico or

[1] http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/cal/BorderAction.PDF
[2] Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, Section VII.6.
[3] *The Class Structure of Imperialism in 1997*, Section C.6.

other Third World countries can go to socialism and protect their nascent industries, that is one thing, and we should do everything possible to support whatever economic relationship they want to the imperialist countries. Asking an imperialist country to take up economic nationalism is another thing. Instead, we should aim our economic demands to be sure they have an internationalist spin.

That's why we support reforms like a global minimum wage and struggles against particular sweatshops.[4]

MIM does not want Mexico to shoulder the burden of losing its tuna fishing business. We want the imperialist countries to hand over the nets and technology to make it possible to fish without killing the dolphins. That is the general formula for environmental demands when they concern the Third World. If the imperialist countries want higher environmental standards, and they should, let them pay for it. Already they do this within the European Union where some countries pay for the use of less-polluting production techniques by poorer countries.

If the whole world lived U.$. living standards, the species would probably die instantly from pollution, so it is clear the U.$. people owe the world for their system. "It is epic hypocrisy for Americans to scold the poor for destroying nature while U.S. companies are still free to dump toxic wastes from American consumption in poor countries. If they intend to reform the world, America and other advanced nations have to take care of their own mess first."[5] The bourgeois economists think their free trade is more efficient? Well, let them use those efficiency gains to improve the environment and inequality between the Third World and imperialist countries.

Because of the current political climate, raising economic nationalism in Amerika is bound to reinforce "Amerika-first" chauvinism. The main reason for this is that it's not just a few fat cat millionaires who benefit from imperialist exploitation. As the organizers of the Border Action note,[6] Amerikans generally benefit, through cheap prices on imported goods or relatively inflated wages. The campaign against NAFTA fed the usual (incorrect) grousing about "them" stealing "our jobs." The AFL-CIO used Seattle and Washington D.C. protests to bait China — of immediate concern, given the jingoism surrounding the recent spy plane incident.

It is no longer progressive to fight for "30 for 40" in the imperialist countries, because those workers are not exploited. However, demand for a global minimum wage or international labor rights are still entirely progressive and do not increase the existing world war by encouraging imperialist country nationalism.

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[4] http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/mn/text.php?mimfile=mn230/SAMOA.txt

[5] William Greider, *One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1997.

[6] http://parksmanagement.com/border/p_03.htm

500 Years of White Unity

MC12 | October 1992, Revised November 1994

Many people have chosen the 500 year anniversary of the landing of Cristóbal Colón as an opportunity to denounce the colonial conquest of the peoples and lands of these continents. The occasion must also be noted for what it is today: a milestone in the *unbroken chain* of Amerikan oppression which stretches through half a millennium.

MIM has always emphasized that Amerikan oppression is national oppression – the exploitation of nations by a whole nation. Since the first poor whites demanded total subjugation of indigenous peoples, and their working class compatriots in Europe clamored for cheaper consumer commodities produced by slaves, the oppressor nation has, as a whole, feasted on the spoils of genocidal Amerika.

That is why, from the perspective of the oppressed nations, the "left" and "right" of Amerikan politics are so hard to tell apart. In the 1600s, white farmers led a revolt (Bacon's rebellion) to demand more land-grabbing war on native people, and, in Bacon's words, the "utter Ruine and destruction" of all indigenous people. The event is considered a milestone of "democratic resistance" for the Amerikan left.[1]

In the 1700s, the incipient white working class rallied around the Amerikan revolution in order to gain more control over the state's tools of repression and exploitation, and to develop independent capitalism. Sixty-five thousand slaves joined the war on the side of the British, more than 10 times the number who fought for settler Amerika – and many more used the crisis as a chance to fight for freedom on their own. Most of the Amerikan left maintains that revolution as the birth of democracy in Amerika, starting a tradition which must now be remade. The oppressed know that the innovation of that era was the reuniting of Amerikan nationals against their subjects, the indigenous, Black and other oppressed nations.[2]

In the 1800s, modern capitalism gave birth to the Amerikan labor movement. Its leaders fought for the elevation of white workers, the extension of slavery, and the exclusion of oppressed peoples from all spheres of power. When Chinese workers struck for better conditions in the West, white workers forced their unions to organize boycotts of goods which were not "Made with White Labor Only." In 1879, 99% of California white voters

[1] J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, Morningstar Press, 1983. pp. 12-16.
[2] Ibid., p. 19.

voted to ban Chinese immigration, after Chinese workers had built the railroads out West and made huge tracts of California lands suitable for growing crops.[3]

After the bourgeoisie finally convinced white workers that slavery was an infeasible economic system, white workers and their allies took their battles to the streets of Northern cities, fighting to keep Black workers (who were often driven off what little land they had by white settlers) in the lowest industries, jobs and neighborhoods.[4]

White "feminism" further extended the suffering of oppressed nationals, as suffragettes argued that if white men didn't give white women the vote, white power would be fatally threatened. A Kentucky suffragist leader wrote that the National American Women's Suffrage Association "never hesitated to show that the White women's vote would give supremacy to the white race."[5] These white supremacists decided the suffragette movement would wear white. It was a convenient decision: the only thing missing from their day-time wardrobe was the white hoods they needed for nighttime cross-burnings and lynchings.

The Amerikan women of the pseudo-feminist movement today pay proud homage to their early white supremacist sisters, as they wear white in National Organization for Women marches. And the white labor movement leads a massive fight to keep their jobs at hundreds of times the wages of Third World workers, and keep immigrant competition away. They clamor for war and conquest abroad, and for the repression of revolutionary movements among the oppressed in the ghettos, barrios and fields within Amerika.

The only revolutionary movement within Amerika since 1492 been the movement of oppressed nations against the dominant Amerikan nation. There is no revolutionary class or gender struggle separate from this overarching reality. Within the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed nations, proletarian and feminist struggles propel the movement forward. There can be no revolutionary "working class" movement, and no revolutionary "feminist" movement, which does not adopt the perspective of the oppressed nations, and fight for their emancipation.

The first test of any revolutionary movement within Amerika remains the same today as it was the day Columbus first raped an Arawak woman: does the movement fundamentally oppose Amerika and all that it stands for? Or does it merely pose left in its quest – deliberate or accidental – for a unified oppressor nation?

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[3] Ibid., pp. 33-7. George McNeill, ed., *The Labor Movement: The Problem of To-day*, New York: 1892, pp. 446-7.

[4] See *William Tuttle, Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*, Athaneum: New York, 1980.

[5] Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, Bantam: New York, 1984, pp. 125-6.

Give Me a Home . . .
Where the Buffalo Roam No More

MC86 and MCØ | January 1992

Homelessness in Amerika is necessarily built into the very structure of the Amerikan Way. But, as if poverty were a new phenomenon, each year the media runs feature stories profiling the poor as a suddenly urgent problem. These articles ignore the real cause: capitalism. Yes, even in this decadent country, where the economy is drunk on the blood of super-profits from the Third World, people die outside, cold and hungry. The system demands their deaths.

The key to full rights as an Amerikan citizen is home-ownership. You can't be a settler without a house. Settler Amerikans stand in line at the banks pleading for mortgage loans, since it is cheaper to own a house than to rent one – if you've got the credit. Not only does real estate ownership mean the opportunity to resell the property for a profit, but owning it provides a tremendous tax-break. The group benefitting the most from government housing subsidies are not "welfare-mothers," but home-owners!

Tax write-offs for propertied citizens amount to more than $54 billion dollars a year in uncollected taxes.[1] Compare that to the total housing subsidy for the poor of $9.2 billion in 1988 (a 72.6% drop from 1981).[2]

Home on the range

Homelessness is not a new phenomenon in Amerika. When the first European settlers arrived, the "New World" supported 100 million indigenous people: who are now homeless. The Founding Fathers imported 100 million former home-owners from Africa.[3] Most of the 25 million survivors of slavery have never owned a home in Amerika.

As home-ownership opportunities grew for the Euro-Amerikan settlers, landlords charged the indigenous, Black, Latino, and non-Anglo immigrant nationalities exorbitant rents to live in tenement ghettos. Over the years, banks and speculators moved entire slums from one area of a city to another, as neighborhoods built by the people were gentrified.

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[1] Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "The Crisis in Housing for the Poor," 7/89, pp. 26-27.
[2] United Church Board for Homeless Ministries, "Homelessness and Affordable Housing," 1989, p. 52.
[3] J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, Morningstar Press, 1983.

Fear of homelessness or unemployment helps keep proletarians working within U.S. borders – working for less and less pay in a country that saw the number of millionaires double from 475,000 in 1982 to 941,000 in 1986.[4]

In 1990, Congress passed the mis-named Cranston-Gonzalez Affordable Housing Act, which subsidizes banks and slippery "non-profit" developers as they buy up decrepit housing projects, foreclosed properties, and entire blocks burned by landlord-arsonists. The buildings are remodeled and sold to the wealthy, as well as to managers and labor-aristocrats who can afford to purchase cooperatives and condominiums.

As the inner-city communities are destroyed by gentrification and people flee to suburban territories in search of work and housing, some people become homeless for a few months, others for years.

Who's homeless?

A 1987 study of interviews with 1,846 homeless people – most of whom were found in soup kitchens or shelters – found that 54% were members of oppressed nationalities. Almost one out of four had done time in a state or federal prison.[5]

This points toward overall poverty rates, which show that 30% of all people officially under the "poverty line" are Black.[6] 41% of Black households have incomes of less than $15,000 per year, compared to 17% of white households.[7]

Homelessness involves two key factors in America: First, some unemployment is structurally built into the system, as it is with any capitalist economy. Second, when the economy suffers internationally, more people become homeless and the bourgeoisie is less able and willing to ensure even their allies the basic necessities.

In the United States both of these categories – structural homelessness and the increases in homelessness with economic downturns – are made up predominantly of the oppressed nations. So it is no surprise that the homeless are mostly Blacks, Latinos, and indigenous peoples.

Liberals, social democrats and Trotskyists love to point to the figures showing the growing numbers of homeless and unemployed and suggest that things are going bad for the white working class. Knight-Ridder recently did a study on the demise of "the middle class" (namely white wage-workers) and how this class now has less money and privileges than it did 20 years ago. But when push comes to shove, the white nation in the United States fairs

[4] Institute for Policy Studies, "The Right To Housing," 1989, pp.17-18.
[5] Urban Institute Project Report, in *Population Today* 2/89. (This study is probably not reliable overall, since it mostly counted people "receiving services.")
[6] 1991 Statistical Abstract of the United States, p. 462.
[7] Ibid., p. 456.

very well compared to the oppressed nations inside Amerika and throughout the Third World.[8]

Don't gimme shelter

Homeless people stay with relatives, with friends, in cars, in parks, in subways, in squats, in empty lots. The places that most people do not want to stay are in the concentration camps – called "shelters," "welfare hotels," "sanctuaries," "work-farms." Municipalities receive Federal monies for warehousing people in city-owned, uninhabitable slum apartments in cities where there are thousands of vacant, "market-rate" units and a surplus of new, unused office space built with government funds.[9]

For people denied real shelter, just staying alive on a hand-to-mouth basis is a full time job. Homelessness is also a profitable industry for various reformists, religious institutions, and poverty pimps who have a financial stake in the continuation of the people's misery.[10]

Solving the problem

After World War II, Amerika stayed drunk on the blood, sweat and tears of the 70% of the world's population who earn in one year what many Amerikan workers make in a week. As 40,000 children die of starvation every day in the nations bled by imperialism, Euro-Amerikan owners and workers (including industrial white workers) dance in their graveyard. Even during a recession, they receive high salaries, wages and a standard of living that dwarfs the below-subsistence pittances that keeps most of the world under-fed, under-employed, and under-housed by any contemporary standards of technologically-possible decency. The not-so-Big Secret of capitalism is that those who do the least work get the most money. It's all about ownership.

Amerikan home-ownership has always rested on the destruction of other peoples' homes. Just ask the Iraqi people. Ask the Panamanian people. Ask the Korean, the Japanese, the Vietnamese, the Cambodian, the Salvadoran people. The list is as long as Amerika is old.

[8] *Detroit News* 11/5/91, p.1. *Detroit Free Press* 11/26/91, p. 1A.
[9] *NYT* 11/6/91, p. A1.
[10] *MIM Notes* 53, p. 9.
MC12 and MC42 contributed to this report.

MIM Strengthens Line on First Nation Self-Determination

MIM | 1996 / 1995 Congress

In 1994, MIM approved a resolution that included this text with regard to the future division of North America:

> Delete: "If ultimately given such authority by the First Nations." Liberated socialist areas do not need to be given "authority" by formations that are not necessarily socialist; and the liberated areas have their own power for self-determination. This recognizes that no socialist government will oppress any nation or encroach on the territory any anti-imperialist nation inhabits or has seized from Amerika.

In 1995, MIM rejected this passage, recognizing it as self-contradictory and objectively a great-nation-chauvinist liquidation of the right to self-determination of the First Nations. It is self-contradictory because denying the First Nation masses the right to self-determination is itself a form of oppression. Lenin recognized that the right of oppressed nations to self-determination extended to the right to bourgeois nationalist secession from a socialist state. Likewise, the right of the peoples of colonies of settlement, such as the First Nations, to self-determination, extends to the right to outright deport the settlers to their or their ancestors' country or continent of origin. MIM does not expect such a drastic measure to be well-advised or necessary – a proletarian dictatorship over the settlers would likely be a more effective method of preventing colonialist-restoration. Nonetheless, a government on North American soil cannot be truly socialist if it does not have the support of the majority of the First Nations masses.

On the Internal Class Structure of the Internal Semi-Colonies

MC5 | February 1998
edited by MC45 | March 1999

I. History of Black Panther Party view of class structure

In the four years preceding the formation of the Black Panthers, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale had the chance to run into activists of the Progressive Labor Party. The Progressive Labor Party and Robert Williams were conduits to Mao of information about the U$A.

In his famous statement of 1963 on the oppression of Black people, Mao countered those nationalists who would say that white workers were the enemy. We have to recall at that moment the Nation of Islam was dominating headlines and Malcolm X was seen as the leader of radical Blacks. He would occasionally have something quotable to say about "white devils." Mao's statement offset the reformism of Martin Luther King and the non-materialism of the Nation of Islam. Huey Newton recalls that even he was not able to summon enough hatred of the Euro-Amerikans to be totally acceptable to the non-Marxist nationalism of the time; although he demonstrated in practice the physical courage to go into shoot-outs with police.

Unfortunately, given the climate of the times, Mao veered away from a serious analysis of the class structure of the United $tates and promoted a stereotypical view. Some Chinese documents on the national question within U.S. borders at the time do not even mention super-profits and thus prepare reconciliation with social-democracy in order to fight Islam, a most definitely incorrect strategy.

Nonetheless, throughout the 1960s, the *Peking Review* of the Chinese Communist Party was admitting that comrades in the United $tates "were beginning" to study Mao Zedong Thought. The first Chinese references to the Black Panthers were of this nature. Revisionists of the Wang Ming variety promote the idea that Mao settled the issue of the class structure, when the contrary is the truth: the comrades in the United $tates had only just started studying Marxist-Leninist science and Mao Zedong Thought. To think that they had come up with a definitive analysis of the class structure would be like saying the Chinese Revolution was carried out in Moscow classrooms. Those who attack us with such general

statements by Mao and no analysis of U.$. conditions do not understand the first thing about Maoism. We advise them to read the *Selected Works* of Mao from the beginning.

The first analyses of the U.$. class structure in the post-McCarthy period omitted Lenin's concept of labor aristocracy. There are no writings from the CPUSA or the PLP that show any awareness of the original Lenin and COMINTERN pronouncements on the imperialist country class structures. What the Progressive Labor Party said was right out of a chapter of *Das Kapital* – completely removed from U.$. conditions. As we explain elsewhere in a review of their 1968 Boston Magazine, PLP performed the magic act of disappearing the petty-bourgeoisie in order to smuggle it into the proletarian camp as Lenin spent most of World War I warning against.

At first the Black Panthers accepted the proclamations from Mao in 1963 and 1968 on Black people and re-distributed them in the hundreds of thousands by reprinting them in their newspaper. Newton accepted the view in 1968 that 98 percent of Black people were have-nots, even higher than the 94 percent the APSP says today. As time went on the Black Panther Party started showing awareness of the concept of the labor aristocracy, middle classes generally and the situation in Algeria. In comments on the U.S. Constitution Huey Newton referred to settlers.

By 1970, Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver were both putting forward something a little different than what would be found in standard Maoist circles. Influenced by Fanon, they took up Lenin and wrote off the economic demands of the middle-classes as imperialist parasitism. Then they said what was left was the lumpenproletariat. This represented the correct recognition that salary and wage-receiving people within U$ borders are labor-aristocracy or higher, unless they are undocumented.

So at first the Black Panthers were well served by reprinting what Mao said with the feedback of Robert Williams and the Progressive Labor Party. As time went on, the Black Panthers took Mao seriously and devised an analysis specific to their conditions. That analysis shows that there is a bridge from Lenin to Fanon and Mao, if conditions are such that there is no industrial proletariat.

As we have explained in *MIM Theory 10* and elsewhere, Lenin provided the concept that entire nations might be bought off with surplus-value sucked out of the colonies. Newton and Cleaver accepted this idea and argued that the proletariat ascended to the middle-classes. Only the lumpenproletariat that does not get paid might be considered otherwise.

Huey Newton said,

> In this country, 1970, the Black Panther Party issued a document. Our Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, who now is in Algeria, wrote a pamphlet called 'On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party.' In that work Eldridge Cleaver stated that neither the proletarians nor the industrial workers carry the potentialities for

> revolution in this country at this time. He claimed that the left wing of the proletarians, the lumpenproletarians, have that revolutionary potential, and in fact, acting as the vanguard, they would carry the people of the world to the final climax of the transformation of society. It has been stated by some people, by some parties, by some organizations, by the Progressive Labor Party, that revolution is impossible. How can the lumpenproletarians carry out a successful socialist transformation when they are only a minority?[1]

Answering his own question, Huey Newton did not say that the oppressed nations (a concept he was moving out of) were majority lumpen but he said that the lumpenproletariat was going to become the majority of society.

> Technology is developing at such a rapid rate that automation will progress. . . If the ruling circle remains in power it seems to me that capitalists will continue to develop their technological machinery because they are not interested in the people. Therefore, I expect from them the logic that they have always followed: to make as much money as possible, and pay the people as little as possible.[2]

Furthermore,

> If revolution does not occur almost immediately, and I say almost immediately because technology is making leaps (it made a leap all the way to the moon), and if the ruling circle remains in power the proletarian working class will definitely be on the decline because they will be unemployables and therefore swell the ranks of the lumpens, who are the present unemployables. Every worker is in jeopardy because of the ruling circle, which is why we say that the lumpenproletarians have the potential for revolution, will probably carry out the revolution, and in the near future will be the popular majority. Of course, I would not like to see more of my people unemployed or become unemployables, but being objective, because we're dialectical materialists, we must acknowledge the facts.[3]

According to Newton,

> How can we say that we have accomplished revolution if we redistribute the wealth just to the people here in North America when the ruling circle itself is guilty . . . they have taken away the goods of the people of the world, transported them to America and used them as their very own.[4]

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[1] Huey Newton, *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey Newton* (NY: Random House, 1972), p. 26.
[2] Ibid, pp. 27-8.
[3] Ibid, p. 28.
[4] Ibid., p. 34.

This was an excellent point, one that the APSP missed as MIM showed in our review of that organization in *MIM Theory 8*. Newton understood what was wrong with narrow nationalism, to such an extent that he preferred to chuck the whole concept of nation.

In a related point very similar to MIM line in *MIM Theory 7*, Newton points out that a country that exploits the whole world will have to be corrected by what MIM calls a joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed nations. Here is how Newton put it:

> The bourgeoisie that is based here in America has an international character because it exploits the world, it controls the wealth of the world; it has stolen, usurped, the wealth of the people of the world, including the people who are in the Black colony here in America and who were stolen from Africa. We feel that the only way that we can combat an international enemy is through an international strategy of unity of all exploited people who will overthrow the international bourgeoisie and replace it with a dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the world.[5]

Newton did not call the present U$ majority revolutionary. The Black Panthers said it would take the descent into the lumpen from the petty-bourgeoisie to create a revolutionary majority. MIM has not put forward the line of an emerging lumpen majority. However, we must admit certain facts pointing in this direction. One is that since the time Newton wrote, a prison craze did start, and middle-aged and younger people alive today are on pace to live to see the majority of the oppressed nations people thrown in prison if present trends continue in the U$A. There is also some evidence of this craze spreading to Europe; although Europe starts considerably "behind," which is one situation in which "behind" means ahead. Secondly, others have pointed to the development of technology that makes it possible for the ruling class to single-handedly oppress the vast majority of people with persynalized weapons of militarism and with technology that makes labor obsolete. Some argue that the labor theory of value is now obsolete, because we are headed for a future where there is no labor or only very small quantities.

We believe that the materialism displayed by Newton is leagues ahead of that seen in the labor aristocracy and Kautskyite circles criticizing MIM. We would like to keep his theory of the lumpenproletariat in mind. He also adds to it in the book *In Search of Common Ground*, where he explains why the concept of inter-communalism is necessary. It turns out that just as the PLP break with Mao that resulted in so much splintering since that time was inspired by Vietnam, Huey Newton's eclectic break with Mao was also inspired by Vietnam. Neither PLP nor the BPP liked what Mao was doing about Vietnam – criticizing revisionism in private and upholding united front in public. Huey Newton relates that he was writing a letter to the Vietnamese Communist Party to criticize it for nationalism, but he wrote the letter and tossed and turned in his sleep. When he awoke he decided he felt too guilty to be able to criticize the Vietnamese while they were being bombed. Like PL, he now accepted

[5] Ibid., pp. 197-8.

that all nationalism is bad, but he also was still unwilling to criticize the Vietnamese for revisionism as Mao did.

From this time onward, under the theory of "revolutionary intercommunalism," Newton took up eclecticism. He still liked Mao, but he now liked any resistance to "reactionary intercommunalism" equally. Kim Il Sung, Castro, Ho, Fanon and Mao were now to be treated equally in Black Panther literature. Ultimately the material reason Newton gave for this was that even in China, the U.$. empire was in force, because Mao could not reclaim Taiwan. The problem was even worse of course for occupied Korea and Vietnam. All peoples were under the U.$. empire according to Newton, but there were some liberated territories practicing revolutionary intercommunalism. Thus Newton felt it necessary to lump Mao's China into having merely a community, not a state. The proof of not having a state to Newton was the existence of Taiwan under U.$. control. The community in China was simply the strongest community awaiting other communities to advance so that a state could be administered over U.$. imperialism.

In both *To Die for the People* and in *In Search of Common Ground*, Newton stresses materialism, science and the fact that oppressed nationality people of the internal semi-colonies are not much different than oppressor nation people. "The people and the economy are so integrated into the imperialist empire that it's impossible to 'decolonize,' to return to the former conditions of existence."[6] Newton went on to say that settlers returned from their colonies in many countries, but those colonies continued acting as before, as part of the empire. Thus "nations no longer exist."[7] Speaking of the successes in China, Vietnam and Korea, Newton referred to these as "revolutionary ontercommunalism" and opposed it to the fate of most people which is "reactionary intercommunalism."

Our summation of the BPP view on the internal class structure of the U$A and its internal semi-colonies is that in no nation of North America or imperialism generally is the lumpen yet the majority. On the other hand, we agree with Newton that outside the lumpen and undocumented workers, there is no revolutionary class inside imperialist country borders. We continue to uphold international proletarian-led revolution, with exploited and superexploited workers of the Third World at the head. All the combined John Browns and Huey Newtons within U$ borders will not be enough to administer the dictatorship of the proletariat, because we have to be absolutely sure that U.$. imperialism does not raise its head again once it is defeated.

MIM organizes for the interests of the u.$. lumpenproletariat as we organize for the interests of the international proletariat. Yet we take to heart Mao's admonition that the lumpen class without proper and decisive leadership is not a reliable revolutionary vehicle. Mao wrote that

[6] Kai T. Erikson intro., *In Search of Common Ground: Conversations with Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 30.
[7] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

the lumpen "lead the most precarious existence of all. One of China's difficult problems is how to handle these people. Brave fighters but apt to be destructive, they can become a revolutionary force if given proper guidance."[8] MIM takes this analysis by Mao to mean that while the lumpen truly have nothing to lose in revolutionary struggle and everything to gain, they may lack elements of class consciousness that define more organized proletariat. So as we look at the situation within u.$. borders today and see that the revolutionary classes have no kind of majority here, we take responsibility for leading with the line of the economic interests of the lumpen and undocumented workers.

Unlike Newton, we say that any time a community has organized force it has a state, the dictatorship of one class over another. It is necessary to say as much to avoid the unaccountability of anarchists and bourgeois democrats. For example, the U.S. Civil War involved the organized use of force and the next major advance in class and nation relations will also involve oppositions of organized force. Calling MIM seditious for pointing this out would be like blaming a historian of Abraham Lincoln for the Civil War. We just point out the facts and which theories go along with the facts.

Even the Maoists in Peru and the Philippines have incipient states. The Mohawk Nation also has a state and Huey Newton had one in Oakland. The advantage of Newton's position is that it accounts for the situation of small nations and does not expect that they will seize territory and set up completely independent nation-states. Newton says that is impossible for everyone including China, thus setting up a standard of what is ultraleft. By his definitions, MIM reasons that Newton would have called us ultraleft for insisting that a party with organized force must have a state. He went a step farther in opposing imperialism while also attacking narrow nationalism.

MIM agrees with Newton that even small communities must get on the revolutionary road and start the struggle even if they are dispersed as Newton believed the Black communities to be. If Blacks in Los Angeles organize force to be their own police, they are a state just as much as a state set up parallel in New York. There may be very small states. What Newton missed was that within those communities he was calling revolutionary intercommunalist, it is possible to return to reactionary intercommunalism. Such a return is not a foregone conclusion because of the degree of imperialist assimilation of oppressed peoples. It is a question of the class enemy from within. Vietnam has proved willing to return to assimilation and capitalism. In this, MIM calls Newton ultraleft, because looking at the many revolutionary movements around the world some of which held state power like the Chinese Communists, Newton insisted that none should be weighted with the accountability of statehood. We say this is ultraleftism because the theory moves ahead of concrete conditions rather than accounting for what is really going on.

[8] Mao Zedong, "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung,* Vol. I. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p. 19.

MIM believes part of Newton's problem lies in his failure to fully explain the need for a new theory of revolutionary intercommunalism. Unable to distinguish among revolutionary movements with different ideological leadership and unwilling to account for the defense of territory seized through revolution, Newton's theory of intercommunalism disagrees with Lenin's line on ending World War I. Lenin argued against Trotsky that the first responsibility of a revolutionary party upon seizing state power was to defend its gains in the largest territory possible by not overreaching the boundaries it could defend. Mao's private criticism of the Vietnamese for revisionism was another approach to taking responsibility for revolutionary gains. Honoring the united front, Mao took responsibility for trying to help the Vietnamese learn from China's more advanced stage of revolution. While Newton elaborated on some important aspects of the struggles of revolutionary governments, his theory of revolutionary intercommunalism has the air of theory for its own sake. The theory makes proletarian parties less accountable for protecting their own political gains than either Lenin or Mao did. Newton's theory is newer, but it is a step back from the practice of building socialism in one country or one base area.

Mao proved to be correct about Vietnam being on the capitalist-road. What the communists of the time failed to do was follow Mao on both fighting revisionism and upholding some united front. PL wanted to fight revisionism and ditch the united front. Others like many in RYM I wanted to ditch fighting revisionism and uphold the united front as the be-all and end-all. MIM does not believe it is possible to fight revisionism without upholding united front and we also don't believe it is possible to have a proletarian-led united front without fighting revisionism. In fact, where there is no proletarian pole there is no united front, so in this sense it is meaningless to talk about united front without fighting revisionism first.

It is fitting that it would be Huey Newton to be so concerned about imperialist assimilation that he would devise a whole theory of intercommunalism to address it. We agree with him that it is not a straight-forward matter for an oppressed nation to put itself first while it is within an imperialist economic framework. In such a case where the relationship is such that super-profits flow into an oppressed nation (internal semi-colony) we cannot even say nationalism of an oppressed nation is applied internationalism. Specifically Newton did not want to see Black organizing for a share of global imperialist loot. For this reason he did not believe that even Black workers were a revolutionary proletariat and he took greater interest in the lumpenproletariat and how the lumpenproletariat was assuring its consumption rights without a job providing income.

II. Class structure and exploitation

a. Genocide

One of the main reasons that MIM has had difficulty with pinning down the class structure of the internal semi-colonies is understanding the role of genocide and past appropriations of labor in class formation. Today, when it comes to answering what class various oppressed

nationality people are in, we finally answer that historical genocide and exploitation should be thought of as affecting the property passed down from generation to generation.

When it comes to understanding whether oppressed internal semi-colonies are net exploiters through imperialism or whether they are exploited, it seems that genocide should be accounted for as an historical and continuing debt. Recently, a former member of CPUSA circles apparently decided that MIM is slightly more correct than both the CPUSA and the Workers World Party and started working with MIM. He wrote to MIM various anti-Semitic comments that also showed a confused understanding of fascism. Not surprisingly the same persyn contended that First Nation people cannot be said to be exploited. He says they were killed, so no labor was extracted. This brings us in a crude way to the question of the impact of genocide on class structure.

In the main, oppressors carry out genocide in the capitalist context to ease the appropriation of labor both past and present. Past labor known as "dead labor" is capital, unless we mean property of the sort that is land.

Of course, land also has congealed labor that goes into it as a means of production. The work of First Nations to remove rocks from agricultural fields and to build various improvements is something stolen when land is stolen.

It is the accumulation of the means of production through genocide that establishes the basis of class society from the earliest existence of class society. Thus genocide can be thought of as a pre-condition for capitalist exploitation. It is much easier to extract super-profits once an oppressor nation has established its ability and willingness to use genocidal force.

Genocide is thought of as something requiring reparations as a matter of justice. Does such a concept relate to our understanding of class structure? According to an informative APSP pamphlet we reviewed in *MIM Theory 8*, the debt owed for slavery is in the trillions of dollars. During the Vietnam War, the Black Panthers suggested that the U$A pay $10 billion for 1 million killed in Vietnam in reparations. How do we relate such calculations to our understanding of class structure? And what do we do with the fact that any repayment of First Nations must surely make each remaining First Nation member a millionaire, a new capitalist?

Aside from the theft of the products of labor that usually goes along with genocide, we should look at the economic meaning of genocide. People are after all congealed labor themselves. It took so much food, shelter, clothing and education to make the persyn before s/he was killed by the imperialists or their allies.

When a persyn with one day left to live is killed by imperialists, his or her people are deprived of his or her labor or creations for that one day. When a persyn is struck down at

age 13, a whole adult lifetime of labor is lost to the oppressed nation. Genocide involves both the appropriation of labor and labor-power.

As scientists, we must admit that killing is not part of what Marx called the "productive sector." Rather it is a kind of appropriation more in the waste sector. The military, police and oppressor nation lynch-mobs are part of the unproductive sector. (See a forthcoming *MIM Theory* on the controversial subject of the ideological ramifications of the "unproductive" sector.)

Oppressor nations appropriate the labor and labor-power of other peoples either to waste them in order to seize control of resources and sometimes to take them home and use them. The commodities they steal after killing involve the theft of labor. Much other destruction is appropriation through waste.

When we look at an oppressed nation and wonder why its national bourgeoisie is so weak and why there is either semi-feudalism or dependent capitalism in place, the reason can often be traced to genocide. To be a strong and vibrant bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie has to have had labor to appropriate. If the people in one's area of economic intercourse have been killed off, it is difficult to appropriate labor and become thriving bourgeoisie. Genocide stunts the upper ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie.

Not surprisingly the same writer in MIM circles formerly of CPUSA circles also failed to understand that home and real estate ownership are class and national in nature. The fact that an oppressor nation persyn rarely owns the exact farm his/her great grandparents took from the First Nations does not mean those great grandparents did not trade within their nation. Classes and nations are groups of people not individuals or families. That property ended up in the hands of oppressor nation people one way or another, usually through sale in exchange for other capital. To this day, people of the same occupation but different nations – e.g. Black versus white – have different average amounts of property. Genocide increases the development of the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie proper in the oppressor nation.

The debt owed by the oppressor nations to oppressed nations of the internal semi-colonies is in the trillions. The problem for our analysis of the class structure is that the oppressor nation is now paying it back through economically integrating the semi-colonies with imperialism: Now the internal semi-colonies appropriate the labor of the Third World with the help of Uncle Sam. Thus the payback is not with Euro-Amerikan labor but with Third World labor.

The APSP is correct to say that the main issue of reparations is not cash. It is control of institutions. The trillions owed to the oppressed nations mean control of the land and institutions on top of it. The First Nations must control their land here and the Africans must receive control of Africa. In Europe, Blacks can receive their reparations by control of institutions of the economy and in the U$A, Blacks can work out something with the First

Nations to seize land. We do not mean to favor transferring the wealth of Third World people to internal semi-colonies. Quite the opposite, we seek to inspire the internal semi-colonies to be a bridge back to the Third World for the flow of reparations from ex-imperialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

b. Relative deprivation

Various bourgeois social-scientists claim that Marx's labor theory of value is incorrect. Most simply are unaware of it in any meaningful way. Nonetheless, there is a sociology discourse claiming that Marx's ideas of "absolute deprivation" are incorrect, because supposedly absolute immiseration of the proletariat has not happened under capitalism since Marx's time.

MIM does not agree with this thesis. The Third World proletariat has been increasingly exploited. Life expectancies have improved over feudalism. We cannot deny that, but Marx never did deny that capitalism represented progress over feudalism. The question is what happens within capitalist society. We agree that the conditions of those workers bought off by imperialism and turned into a labor aristocracy have improved, but for the world's majority, imperialism has brought absolute immiseration.

We hold that Marx's absolute immiseration theory holds true to this day with regard to life under capitalism. We point to three facts alone that justify it, the first two of which are rooted in the anarchy of production under capitalism created by intra-bourgeois competition. One is the continued and incremental destruction of the environment that only becomes more thorough the more technology advances under capitalism. Such destruction is mitigated only by the class struggle to put the workers' health interests into account in the design of production processes. Two, we point to modern militarism which threatens more people and kills more people than ever before. Thirdly, the greater wealth of imperialist societies and their modernization of social control means higher percentages of people in prison and psychiatric wards, higher than at any time in previous history. It all boils down to killing and wasting of humyn life.

To avoid talking about militarism, the environment and prison, the bourgeois social scientists talk about "relative deprivation," in which having one VCR is a disadvantage if your neighbor has two. Obviously this is a backward concept in many regards as far as we Marxists are concerned. It is not fundamental to our political economy analysis.

Genocide is a matter of absolute immiseration. There can be nothing worse. In contrast, the fact that the internal semi-colonies have stunted upper ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie is a matter of relative deprivation.

Knowledge of relative oppression helps us form an understanding of what we Marxists call "the particularities" of our material conditions. When comparing Euro-Amerikans with oppressed nations, we can often show that oppressed nations are in a relatively poor

position. Such is important for reasons ranging from the united front to why national consciousness arises to why separate nation vanguard parties may be necessary until we reach higher stages of humyn development.

c. Appropriation of labor

Ultimately the class structure is about the appropriation of labor. In *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997*, I go at length into the calculations for who is appropriating labor. Blacks, First Nations, Aztlan people, Puerto Ricans and Asian-descended people within imperialist country borders have histories of exploitation and oppression, but today, with the exceptions of the undocumented and lumpen-proletariat, they differ from Euro-Amerikan workers only in degree, not in quality when it comes to their relationship to the Third World proletariat. As we have already shown in *MIM Theory 1*, for this reason, Blacks taken as a nation are ahead of some advanced European capitalist countries in terms of income. This shows us that there is variation within capitalism and the buying off of workers. A similar thing is seen in Ireland and the Six Counties of "Northern Ireland," where although Ireland faces national oppression, its workers are integrated economically into imperialism to such an extent that they compare favorably with the conditions of workers in some imperialist countries. Thus there is only a proletariat in the war-torn Six Counties of Ireland. The proletariat there suffers discrimination relative to Protestant workers on a national basis with religion as the cover.

We must recall that "having nothing to lose but chains" is the definition of proletariat. Genocide and historical exploitation determine whether one is born into the proletariat, but they do not prevent the imperialists from lifting today's oppressed nationalities out of their propertyless condition into the labor aristocracy. A persyn born with no property may nonetheless start to absorb more labor in consumption than the persyn gives back to class society in production. True, such a labor-aristocracy will be newer and less stable than the labor aristocracy of the oppressor nations, but it is labor aristocracy nonetheless. In fact, those with a sense of scrambling for crumbs off the plate are often the most reactionary of all towards the proletariat they just left and seek to stay above.

In this regard, as we have seen already, Latino workers continue to have a high proportion in the productive sector. We can still speak of an Aztlan proletariat. We see a genuine "split in the working-class" as Lenin said within that oppressed internal semi-colony. As we will detail elsewhere though, even in the case of Puerto Rico, the economic integration with imperialism has already occurred to such an extent that the economic tide is on the Puerto Rican labor aristocracy's side.

The "Brown" peoples are the most proletarian within the internal semi-colonies. There are also immigrant Haitians and African nationalities and "boat people" from Asia – all terribly exploited or super-exploited and oppressed. To the extent that these people are workers and they are subjected to oppression outside the law applying to U.$. citizen laborers, we can say

there is a small Black and Asian proletariat. What we must be clear about though is that only class sectors dominated by undocumented work in the productive sectors form a proletariat. Not even all undocumented people are proletariat or lumpenproletariat. A good portion enters the petty-bourgeoisie immediately upon migration through family connections and various legal fronts.

The vast majority of the employed Black, First Nation and Asian-descended peoples is labor aristocracy or higher. An examination of the figures in *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997* makes clear that the repatriation of profits from the Third World, the transfer of surplus-value from the productive sector in the Third World to the unproductive sector in the First World and the administrative fixing of prices by multinational corporations to artificially lower prices of Third World goods and thus disguise transfer of surplus-labor – all these add up to such an extent that it is impossible to see any proletariat where there is an imperialist country minimum wage in effect. That minimum wage is almost ten times the average wage in the Third World.

The conclusive calculation in an upcoming *MIM Theory* is to look at the new wealth and profits of the imperialists every year and figure out where they got that piece of pie. If the imperialists gave back their discrimination profits to the internal semi-colonies, would the imperialists still have the same new wealth added each year? The answer is yes.

The imperialist countries are absorbing so much pie from the Third World that even if discrimination ended, the imperialists would still be covered completely by the pie from the Third World, without losing any pie. The reason for this is that the Third World hands all of the people within U.$. borders with minimum wage status using U.S. currency an enormous piece of pie. Out of that enormous pie that also ends up in internal semi-colony hands, the internal semi-colonies surrender a relatively small piece as discrimination profits. The class that would lose from an end to discrimination is the white petty-bourgeoisie, mostly the labor aristocracy. The labor aristocracy would still be eating super-profit pie, but its piece would be smaller if the discrimination profits were gone. The pie the labor aristocracy makes would still be smaller than it eats.

The imperialist piece of surplus-value pie is covered by merely one slice of the pie that the Third World has to hand over to the imperialist countries. If we look at the piece of pie called "transfer of surplus-value from the productive sector in the Third World to the unproductive sector in the imperialist countries," we see the following. The Third World delivers bananas and sneakers to the door of imperialism. Upon arrival in the imperialist countries, the banana and sneaker workers do not sell them; salespeople sell them. These salespeople help the boss make his profit and they get paid out of the surplus-value extracted in the Third World. Surplus-value is never extracted from salespeople or other unproductive sector workers that Poulantzas correctly refers to as "new petty-bourgeoisie" in keeping with Lenin's teachings on the labor aristocracy. The persyn on the street can figure it out this way. If all a country had was salespeople and security guards, it would die quickly with nothing to

sell or guard. If however, a country had no unproductive sector, it could still barter and create wealth, just not the usual way under capitalism. The mark-up on Third World goods delivered to imperialism is sufficient to explain all the new wealth of the imperialists every year. The other pieces of the surplus-value pie can be used to account for the obesity of the oppressor-nation labor aristocracy and the internal semi-colony labor aristocracy.

Only the lumpenproletariat (e.g. making license plates in prison or the minority of lumpen getting sub-minimum wage as a hooker or drug-dealer) and undocumented workers face life without an imperialist country minimum wage and similar laws. Workers making license plates in prison may be more objectively revolutionary than regular industrial proletarians. On the whole, MIM looks to the lumpen and the undocumented productive sector workers to form the core of that group whose economic demands we can cater to somewhat successfully. Even in these groups we will have difficulty though, because the pull of parasitic life in the labor aristocracy exists for the majority and is clear to any persyn who looks around – Euro-Amerikan, Black, Latino, Asian or First Nation. The tendency will be for people to see that parasitism all around and seek to join it rather than wage a class struggle to end parasitism.

It was a disappointment to see voting Blacks and Asian-descended people go for Proposition 187 in California. That is the kind of extreme thing we would expect to see from the labor aristocracy and other exploiter classes. There were also key Black labor spokespeople attacking foreign workers in bashing NAFTA. In 1998, there are die-hard state-hood supporters in Puerto Rico who only wish to complete the seal of parasitism on Puerto Rico. The state-hooders argue that all Puerto Ricans will be entitled to more welfare benefits if they hook up officially with the world's greatest gravy-train. All such people attacking workers outside imperialist country borders represent the parasitic classes. Their attitude of seeking to integrate with imperialism to re-divide the surplus-value extracted from the world must be combated. On the other hand, where the labor aristocracy is in dominant position relative to the proletariat, there is a question of whether military struggle and various other resources would be better committed in some other nation where the imperialist link in the chain is weaker. The extent of the parasitic classes in the minority of the world's population inside imperialist borders is no cause for paralysis. We simply adjust our strategy to focus in more fruitful areas than advocating the economic demands of parasitic classes.

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Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri
Harvard University Press, 2000

Recommending *Empire* to us, an anonymous writer told MIM that if there is an anti-Christ, then this book is the anti-MIM. Upon reading the book, MIM can see why this correct thought occurred to the little birdie who wrote us. It handles many of the same topics MIM covered in *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997*, available free on our web page. While MIM is not mentioned, the book is talking to us.

Having published the "Black Book" on the alleged "crimes" of communism two years ago, in 2000 Harvard University Press regaled us with a book openly claiming to be communist, a work of theory proclaiming to offer a new synthesis of Marxism in ponderous academic language approved by numerous reviewers including Etienne Balibar and others who said it is a grand rewriting of the "Communist Manifesto." In fact, it is tempting to say that *Empire*'s description of contemporary reality and offer to re-write Marxism is the intersection of Amerikan business pulp with academic post-modernism; however, in actual fact, MIM does appreciate this book above all for its self-consciousness.

While most people calling themselves communist in the imperialist countries have long ago abandoned the labor theory of value and continue to agitate for the demands of the labor aristocracy and have learned nothing of social-democracy's role in clearing the way for fascism and war, Hardt and Negri retain enough scientific sensibility to realize that they have accounts to settle with the labor theory of value and numerous other propositions of Marxism- Leninism-Maoism. Wherever MIM would uphold a thesis of how the imperialist world works, Hardt and Negri rarely refute MIM with data, especially not economic data, but they do offer an alternative theoretical proposition. Since the large mass of anarchists and non-party Mensheviks have already headed in the direction that Hardt and Negri point to, we can expect this book to have some impact amongst the intelligentsia.

Empire: The title of the book arises because of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the phenomenon of globalization, which is world trade with fewer political restrictions. Hardt and Negri deny that the new world order is explicitly Amerikan (e.g., p. xiii). Rather, U.$.

power has projected itself to such an extent that it truly has united the world under one roof, where the nation-state has little relevance anymore according to Hardt & Negri.

In much of the book, the authors use the word "imperialism" to refer to what existed until the Vietnam War. In the last quarter century, we have had "*Empire*," which is the seamless whole with no center according to Hardt & Negri. In contrast, MIM uses the word "imperialism" to mean the highest stage of capitalism and we refer to "colonialism" to cover much of what Hardt & Negri call "imperialism." We believe we have been in the same era of "imperialism" since Lenin wrote about it.

Perhaps rewriting dialectics itself while still seeing a world as an interconnected whole, Hardt & Negri say, "In the constitution of *Empire* there is no longer an 'outside' to power and thus no longer weak links – if by weak link we mean an external point where the articulations of global power are vulnerable" (p. 58). As a result, they say, "the virtual center of *Empire* can be attacked from any point. The tactical preoccupations of the old revolutionary school are thus completely irretrievable" (p. 59).

What is the proletariat?

As far as MIM knows, there are still people starving to death in 7 or 8 digit figures each year. Many more are homeless and lack adequate medical care. The discipline called for from the dire situation of the Third World exploited and super-exploited is not the discipline that Hardt & Negri call for. "When we speak of the militant, we are not thinking of anything like the sad, ascetic agent of the Third International whose soul was deeply permeated by Soviet state reason. . . . We are thinking of nothing like that and of no one who acts on the basis of duty and discipline" (pp. 411-2).

In contrast, what Hardt & Negri do is glorify aspects of parasitism by renaming them resistance by the most advanced proletariat in the world, perhaps centered in "what was going on in Haight-Ashbury and across the United States in the 1960s" (p. 274). They are referring to doing heavy drugs and "dropping out."

Next they refer to "CP" time, which refers to workers moving slowly at "Colored People's" time, and also they talk about "the young woman who refused to get married and make a family" (p. 274). Hence, they draw a picture of lack of discipline as the true resistance to *Empire*, true proletarian characteristics – things that MIM would just as often see as examples of the decadence of imperialism.

Having blathered about "democracy" here and there, Hardt & Negri do not surprise MIM by saying that laziness is the hallmark of the proletariat. Too many people reason backward from what a majority or large number of people do and conclude it must be proletarian in imperialist countries. They have social-democratic and populist prejudices and are completely taken aback when MIM says the proletariat is tiny to non-existent in major imperialist countries.

For MIM, aversion to work, laziness, lack of discipline – these have an ambiguous impact in imperialist society. If the workers say they have the right to be lazy while they support imperialism to extract super-profits, the result is pure decadence, not proletarian life. In fact, this is what is happening – lazy enjoyment of parasitic life, now encouraged by Hardt & Negri who say the Leninist style party of the Third International is *passe*.

MIM is old-fashioned this way. We see no change from the times of Marx or Lenin on this score and we still see a hierarchy of needs as characterizing humyns – and no, LSD is not one of them. We count on people like Hardt & Negri to let us know when this is no longer the case. Already they do not think twice about counting entertainment service workers as proletarians and an increasing portion of the proletariat to boot (p. 292). No doubt the paid skippers of yachts and drivers of race cars and monster trucks are important to the communist movement, and it was terrible of Marx not to count service-workers such as butlers as producing value.

Hardt & Negri alternate between acknowledging the realities of which MIM speaks and then forgetting them: "The geographical and racial lines of oppression and exploitation that were established during the era of colonialism and imperialism have in many respects not declined but instead increased exponentially" (p. 43). Later they will say that the Third World and First World proletariat are already united.

Not surprisingly, Hardt & Negri talk about the proletariat as if it were Europeans and Amerikans, with Russians thrown in now and then as the exception that proves the rule: "mechanisms of command become ever more 'democratic,' ever more immanent to the social field, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens" (p. 23).

As far as MIM knows, it is only in the imperialist countries that more than half the people hold white-collar jobs. College for more than half is not the norm. In fact, last we checked, to go to college means that someone feeds, clothes and shelters the student, unless that student is a work-study student to a sufficient degree, something that rarely happens even when there is work-study, because such "work" is usually parasitic in the imperialist countries. In other words, the privilege of college education in this world is still essentially the deposit of capital in the brains of elites, capital with its origins in the Third World.

In contradiction with themselves, Hardt & Negri admit that "constant capital tends to be constituted and represented within variable capital, in the brains, bodies, and cooperation of productive subjects" (p. 385). There is nothing new about this idea of putting capital into someone's brain. Marx already recognized it as a hallmark of the petty-bourgeoisie. Contrary, to Hardt & Negri who call for "reappropriation" (p. 406) of the capital in their own brains by white-collar workers, the capital placed in those brains is what makes those people not proletarian. There is a class conflict over such capital and no proletarian content to be calling for the autonomy of such producers.

Hardt & Negri say, "we are faced once again with the analytical task of understanding the new composition of the proletariat as a class" (p. 53). Since MIM believes this will result in another round of dominant nation chauvinism and imperialist apologetics, MIM prefers that these post-modernists write a book about why the very definition of proletariat changed and who changed the definition.

What is value?

Hardt & Negri are aware that the labor theory of value would tend in the MIM-type direction, so it is quite scientifically responsible of them to abdicate it in the open. We are not saying that they did a thorough job in coming to terms with the theory of value, and they toss the concept of use- value in a sentence (p. 386), but the step toward responsibility is remarkable in itself.

Echoing countless bourgeois business pulp authors justifying the gap between the rich nations and poor ones, Hardt & Negri come up with a Marxist veneer, "The central role previously occupied by the labor power of mass factory workers in the production of surplus value is today increasingly filled by intellectual, immaterial, and communicative labor power. It is thus necessary to develop a new political theory of value that can pose the problem of this new capitalist accumulation of value at the center of the mechanism of exploitation (and thus, the center of potential revolt)" (p. 29). In other words, whatever the white workers are doing must be most advanced instead of an expression of parasitism. If in the past the most advanced class was the industrial proletariat, today it is the Third World with a disproportionate share of such people with the outlook of "nothing to lose but their chains" and Hardt & Negri conclude that industrial work is not most advanced anymore.

According to Hardt & Negri, who make no thorough examination of Marx's theory of surplus-value, all that matters is that workers be dominated by capital to be counted as proletarian (p. 256). There are three new areas of work that Hardt & Negri want counted as "proletarian," areas which they implicitly recognize Marx did not count: "the communicative labor of industrial production that has newly become linked in informational networks, the interactive labor of symbolic analysis and problem solving, and the labor of the production and manipulation of affects" (p. 30), this last point loved by pseudo-feminists of academia no doubt. Such grandstanding is the purpose of the theory, and later Hardt & Negri prove it by tossing the theory of value altogether into the category of ineffable ontology (pp. 355-6, 365) – mysticism so prevalent in post-modernism.

Such a conception destroys Marx's concept of surplus-value completely. In the year 2001 it remains true that there is a big distinction between the car sold to someone and the car sitting in the dealer's lot with no owner. Too many unsold goods not only influence credit but result in a profit crisis for the capitalists. Hardt & Negri's preferred theory offers no insight into that. Likewise, they offer no way to determine what is parasitic existence and

what is not. Yet this is not surprising, since Hardt & Negri offer the demand for a universal salary and acceptance of whatever degree of work people do as they choose.

Another consequence of what Hardt & Negri say is that there is no theoretical limit to how much workers can sit around contemplating technology at their desks. There is no sense of necessity to Hardt & Negri, but that does not surprise us, because no one is starving or even needs food, shelter and clothing anymore in what they call the post-modern world. "In postmodernity the social wealth accumulated is increasingly immaterial; it involves social relations, communication systems, information, and affective networks" (p. 258). Hardt & Negri are essentially telling us that *Empire* is a new progressive phase of capitalism such that new forms of wealth are accumulated. They draw an analogy to how capitalism was superior to previous modes of production (p. 43).

"Freedom is the recognition of necessity," and such knowledge is the same thing as understanding the need for science. In typical academic fashion where something must be new to be published, Hardt & Negri talk about something new in the imperialist countries as if they were the whole world and not a minority of it.

Oppressor nation anarchism

Hardt & Negri disappeared U.$. global dominance, but much more important is their disappearance of all national division between oppressor and oppressed: "the worker struggles [in the Vietnam War era – MC5] throughout the domain of international capital already decreed the end of the division between First and Third Worlds and the potential political integration of the entire global proletariat. . . With this objective convergence and accumulation of struggles, Third Worldist perspectives, which may earlier have had a limited utility, were now completely useless" (p. 264). They also reject the idea that the world is divided into bourgeois countries and proletarian countries, put forward in one book about Africa (footnote, p. 457).

Hence, without a single economic statistic, Hardt and Negri dismissed the economic basis for national oppression in recent times. It is the type of thing intellectuals do and that Marx criticized in his essay on the "Poverty of Philosophy." Hardt & Negri are involved in creating a new political mythology of the white proletariat – economic facts of life be damned.

Their opportunism has received tremendous encouragement around the world in the international communist movement by those who reason first from political generalities and methods instead of the class structure as it actually exists. They throw about terms like "ultraleft" and "opportunist" and "sectarian" without knowing where they are going with such terms used by political helmspeople. Political steering can only have meaning when people know where they stand with both feet on the ground and where they are going.

Otherwise, such words tossed about are mere expressions of pre-scientific prejudice, usually of the social-democratic and populist sorts.

The most advanced proletariat in the world, they say

According to Hardt & Negri, the imperialist country workers used to be a "labor aristocracy." With the transition to *Empire*, however, Hardt & Negri say the imperialist country workers became the most advanced again: "The imperialist advantages of any national working class had begun to wither away. The common struggles of the proletariat in the subordinate countries took away the possibility of the old imperialist strategy of transferring the crisis from the metropolitan terrain to its subordinate territories" (p. 263). One thing for sure, economic statistics are not a strong suit for Hardt & Negri. Once again, with a few strokes of the pen, Hardt & Negri claim to have healed the international schism in the working-class. We could not help wondering why they did not bother to proclaim communism with their pens too, just as Progressive Labor Party proclaimed communism's existence – in its party!

"We can get a first hint of this determinant role of the proletariat by asking ourselves how throughout the crisis the United States was able to maintain its hegemony. The answer lies in large part, perhaps paradoxically, not in the genius of the U.S. politicians or capitalists, but in the power and creativity of the U.S. proletariat. . . the U.S. proletariat appears as the subjective figure that expressed most fully the desires and needs of international or multinational workers" (p. 269). So further down the well-traveled road of imperialist country "worker" chauvinism Hardt & Negri tread.

Speaking aloud, Hardt & Negri were not able to discern that they were talking about a petty-bourgeoisie, not a proletariat. "Against the common wisdom that the U.S. proletariat is weak because of its low party and union representation with respect to Europe and elsewhere, perhaps we should see it as strong for precisely those reasons. Working-class power resides not in the representative institutions but in the antagonism and autonomy of the workers themselves" (p. 269). Hardt & Negri are indeed educated anarchists. They just did not follow their thought through to the end. What do we call such a large mass of people amongst the highest paid in the world but who did it without labor organizing relative to the rest of the world? What class has its power in "autonomy"? That class is the petty-bourgeoisie, in its historical form of the "labor aristocracy" in this case. This class had the super-profits handed to them, not for labor organizing but for supporting imperialism.

The petty-bourgeoisie is the class with the illusion of independence, floating above the proletariat and the imperialists and their respective class disciplines. What Hardt & Negri have discovered is their infatuation with the petty-bourgeoisie able to rise "for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism" (p. 294) in their work on the Internet and other new-fangled gadgets used by that "most advanced" class. While these "most advanced"

"proletarians" are talking about the goods they want on the Internet, some workers are actually manufacturing them.

MIM's sense of alliance

In conclusion, if people like Hardt & Negri did not write this kind of material palatable to the post-modern academic Establishment, the issues in the book would not get any academic coverage at all. On the other hand, if they gave up their day jobs, we'd bet they'd make good artists.

Then there is the matter of their impact in the activist world. On this point we have considerable concern. With several sweeping generalizations typical of the whole book, with a few flourishes of the pen, Hardt & Negri have declared national oppression abolished. Their denial of U.$. dominance and portrayal of an *Empire* with no center is essentially in the interests of the white workers to be equated once again with the Third World workers. With the theory of "immaterial labor," Hardt & Negri move boldly to put the white workers within the proletariat at the presumed head of the communist movement once again, a move which is to put the petty-bourgeois line at the head of the international communist movement.

MIM cares little for the subjectivities of the people of the imperialist countries, but Hardt & Negri make the production of those subjectivities a centerpiece of their book. To them, the Soviet bloc fell apart because it could not motivate its people; even though technologically and militarily it was even with the other bloc (p. 278). The collapse of the Soviet bloc was simply an inevitable transition to post-modernity, they say.

Whatever small portion of subjectivities MIM can influence successfully in the imperialist countries, MIM will not change its approach simply to influence a quantitatively larger number. Hardt & Negri refer to us as "Third Worldist" and they are correct, because we point to the scientific truth that the subjectivities of the Third World will play the more important role. Most people calling themselves communist in the imperialist countries are busy producing subjectivities that will contribute to fascism. It is better that such people sleep than to be awakened by pre-scientific communists and revisionists.

Nonetheless, we consider Hardt & Negri allies to the extent that they have correctly identified that fanning the flames for imperialist protectionism are not the road forward. Like Hardt & Negri, we believe the appropriate response to globalization is not to whine about "our" imperialists going abroad to find workers. That is the response of the propertied with something to lose. Our response is to agitate for an international minimum wage – guaranteed income in Hardt & Negri's case (p. 403). We are for the opening of borders (p. 400), not immigration restrictions playing into fascist hands. All this is a way of saying that we should enter into the globalized imperialist terrain and fight there and not attempt to drag the imperialists back to the previous terrain (pp. 45-6).

It is fine that Hardt & Negri consciously reject MIM-style discipline. They forgot there are people starving to death by the minute and are no longer driven by such facts of life. They deny that they are anarchists, but we are more comfortable calling them "the better anarchists" (but not as good as Sakai) than saying they are communists, but maybe they are "communist anarchists." Their models of activity are the Wobblies – the International Workers of the World (IWW) (pp. 207, 412).

That's OK, because most of the people calling themselves communist in the imperialist countries have a pseudo-discipline of the Khruschev style anyway, and they make it a profession to be at least one step behind in the struggle against revisionism, still denying or at least debating whether or not it was the bourgeoisie in the party that restored capitalism in the Soviet bloc and whether or not it was the labor aristocracy that dragged down the communist movement of the imperialist countries. Increasingly, MIM expects that it will be in dialogue with the partially parasitic elements of our movement led by the likes of Hardt & Negri. To our right, a new revisionism is taking shape to waste the next revolutionary upsurge, so there may be greater hopes in the radical petty-bourgeoisie like Hardt & Negri.

Maoism on Foreign Affairs vs. Pseudo-Marxist Geopolitical Pragmatism

International Minister | December 2000

The Collapse of the Soviet Union:
Causes and Lessons: For the Revolutionary Revival
of the International Communist Movement
International Communist Seminar, 1998

This book represents a triumph of the work of Ludo Martens and his Belgian PTB, a party seeking to reconcile with Castroites, Brezhnevites andHoxhaites. Doing so, Ludo Martens is very close to the numerical center of gravity amongst those calling themselves communist in the world, since there are still many revisionists hanging on to their world views.

To the Maoists, Ludo Martens encourages "constructive engagement" with revisionist parties. By befriending the revisionist parties, one could receive the impression that the revisionists are gaining someone to talk to other than their revisionist selves. Such would be a tactical justification for a Maoist to do what Ludo Martens does.

On the other hand, such a tactic cannot be justified beyond a certain price. Seminar participants are supposed to all uphold Stalin, but in fact, some Trotskyists hang about and the Castroites are allowed in and welcomed despite Castro's many statements of praise of Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping.

Hence, it is one thing to have tactics of "constructive engagement," but it is another thing to allow someone to call him or herself "Marxist-Leninist" when s/he does not truly defend Stalin. Yet, such is not surprising since Ludo Martens himself and a portion of international Hoxhaism fell for Gorbachev – that being another story about "Back to Leninism" for another time.

Thus the seminar supposedly unites to defend Stalin, but on page 10 we already learn that the vast majority of seminar participants welcomed the party representatives from Cuba and Korea and upheld "the defence of socialism in Cuba." For MIM, that puts this conference of 136 organizations beyond the pale from a proletarian point of view.

Whenever MIM raises phony communist Cuba, we never hear about the mode of production in Cuba, but we always hear about the geopolitical necessity of defending Cuba against invasion. Such is the tell-tale sign that Marxism has taken the backseat to geopolitics.

There is nothing special about Cuba facing imperialist invasion. Panama saw Yankee troops. Somalia saw Yankees land and so did Iraq. None were "socialist" countries and still the Yankee invaded. Opposing Yankee invasion is not something we do only for countries like Cuba calling themselves "socialist." Opposing Amerikan imperialism is an internationalist duty. Creating a "special deal" for Cuba and Korea despite their modes of production is an example of neo-colonialism, very typical of the kind of revisionism that would rather fight than switch to scientific Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It is the ideology of those hoping to restore a Soviet social-imperialism and a new neo-colonial orbit.

Thus, from these forces it is as if nothing in the world has changed, largely because they wish to restore the Soviet social-imperialist realm. These parties cannot admit their own failures with regard to defending Stalin and so now they continue defending the same old politics without missing a beat. The collapse of the Soviet Union might as well have not happened, because these people are essentially not interested in the mode of production. They are communists in sentiment in some cases and manipulators of geopolitics in others, but they are not Marxist-Leninist in any case.

The first interesting essay in the book with something new in it is from Dr. Kurt Gossweiler of the former East German revisionist party. Gossweiler seems to realize that there might be some criticism that he is in for given the ruinous collapse in East Germany.

His analysis is that China was a large and independent country which was why its communist party was able to resist Khruschev revisionism. His analysis of Albania is that it had selfish reasons of self-defense against Yugoslavian annexation to oppose Khruschevite revisionism. However, such material analyses of the respective parties would be more persuasive if Gossweiler did not end up excusing the German party leaders essentially because of their geopolitical situation, something we hear about Castro all the time too. We are told that because of the Western troops on its border and because of the force of the USSR, the leadership of the East German communists wanted to side with Mao but did not. "It would be wrong to call the SED a revisionist party. Under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht it put up the maximum resistance possible at that time to the revisionism of the Khruschev clique, and it did so to such an extent that in October 1964 its activities were suppressed" (p. 83). This statement by Gossweiler is indeed something new in the world.

Because of Honecker's anti-fascist role, Gossweiler also excuses him when he replaced Ulbricht at the request of the USSR. "It was more a question of exchanging one of the most gifted leaders, and one of the most seasoned in the German and international class struggle, for a well-meaning party functionary who was too easily led astray owing to his poor leadership qualities" (p. 84).

Gossweiler also gives Honecker credit for repressing Gorbachev's statements in East Germany and states that a violent repression of the pro-Gorbachev demonstrators would have missed the real counter-revolutionaries. Thus, overall, we have some notion that the

party in East Germany deserves criticism, but we are told that the true inside story is that all that could be done was done under Ulbricht while Honecker was simply incompetent when he implemented revisionism.

Whether Cuba's Castro, China's Hua Guofeng or East Germany's Ulbricht and Honecker, we are told there are good reasons not to hoist the banner of communism. Had Ulbricht done it, invasion would have resulted. Had Cuba not gone along with Khruschev, we are told Cuba would have been done in. Essentially we hear again and again that the geopolitical situation demanded compromise of the mode of production itself without an open fight, without an open call to the people to attack revisionism. To take such a stand is to put geopolitics in its own right above Marxism. It is one of the root reasons for the continued division of the revisionists from the genuine international communist movement, even though the Soviet Union is dead. The mere death of the Soviet Union did not erase all the fallacious pseudo-Marxist methods of thought ingrained in the Soviet Union's revisionist followers. As long as geopolitics is put above the mode of production's advance, Marxist-Leninists have no chance of uniting. It is Marxism's attention to the material world that makes unity possible, while making cardinal principles of geopolitical calculation means endless division.

Next in the book follow some essays from the Castro brothers and North Korea – as if nothing has changed in the world and as if Gorbachev and Yeltsin could have occurred without some major betrayal in the Soviet CP. These people just go on singing the same old revisionist song.

After the grossly reactionary documents from Cubans and Koreans, we received another even more reactionary contribution from a Syrian Ammar Bagdache, who seemed hell-bent on being social-fascism incarnate. In the split between Khruschev and Mao, Ammar Bagdache still cannot discern one side being more correct than the other (p. 174). Instead, it is clear that this particular persyn seeks the restoration of the Soviet empire. Like the Nazis before, Ammar Bagdache focuses his hatred of parasitism on the Jews. This would be one thing on the West Bank, but according to A. Bagdache, the Jews, a.k.a "Zionism," were mainly responsible for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union (p. 165). Most of Khruschev's advisers [were supposedly Jews] and the "main" force behind revisionism is supposedly Zionism (p. 168).

While MIM is all for having Marxism-Leninism-Maoism take national forms, what Ammar Bagdache is doing is a violation of the universal aspects of Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It's not surprising that this reactionary essay was also allowed in the book. Again, it is not focused on the mode of production, only how geopolitics – in this case Mideast geopolitics – intersects with capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union. This geopolitical focus goes to such an extent that it wipes out the parasitic nature of imperialism except for the Jews. From the proletarian view, this is the class essence of Hitler's ideology too – an attack on parasitism of the Jews in essence to cover for the parasitism of

imperialism generally. It's a sacrifice of some parasites to let the much bigger bloodsuckers off the hook. Anybody who thinks Amerikan imperialism would miss an imperialist beat if the United $tates had no Jews has major illusions. Such illusions create a major escape hatch for imperialism when it gets into trouble like Germany in the 1930s.

The DKHP-C Turkish comrades also have an essay in the book. Once again, the focus is geopolitical. "It is a matter of fact that it is much easier to create the conditions for open interventions and to put them into practice since the USSR is not a factor of balance anymore, and since the USA is the sole 'superpower' "(p. 256). This is exactly the kind of reasoning that says, "because the USSR is powerful in a geopolitical sense, we will call it socialist." However, Lenin did not call the Kaiser socialist when the Kaiser gave him a railroad car to ride back to Russia.

Furthermore, we heard the traditional Brezhnevite and Trotskyite complaints about Mao from the DKHP-C: "The CP of China, who regarded the USSR as the 'main enemy,' went even so far as to confront progressive and revolutionary movements, if they were supported by the USSR. The support for the counter-revolutionary FNLA and Unita in Angola, and even for Pinochet in Chile were consequences of this policy" (p. 259).

On this point, DKHP-C is one of many parties that has adopted the white man's double standard toward the Soviet Union and China, a standard so white that even some Trotskyists uphold it though it means giving some credence to Stalin. Almost without exception, these organizations accepted and defended the Stalin-Hitler pact, which included real material aid such as the shipment of raw materials from the Soviet Union to Nazi Germany, but let Mao so much as recognize Pinochet or shake hands with Nixon, and these hypocrites attack Mao with no shame – even seeing the obvious today of capitalist restoration in the USSR. If there were all these progressive and revolutionary forces backed by the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union, these critics of Mao should show us one that has a socialist society to show for it. There aren't any, because these forces were all revisionist. Furthermore, as MIM documents elsewhere, Mao supported all the anti-colonial forces in Angola. Perhaps the DKHP-C thought that exclusively supporting the Soviet side was more important than ejecting Portuguese colonialism! That's how important neo-colonialism is for these people to make such a principle of it before colonialism is even done with!

Entire parties have split around the world over the question of the Three Worlds Theory – that's how much the pseudo-Marxists have managed to convince us that geopolitics is so cardinal instead of a matter of strategic calculation of the balance of forces, and not something that would come up in a conference first attempting to regroup around cardinal questions. In the realpolitik world of geopolitics-first thinking, it is not surprising that Great Russian nation interests come to the fore easily and without a second thought, while Mao has to justify himself several times over or entire parties will split. It's exactly the kind of garbage that explains why the Soviet Union under Brezhnev was an equal superpower to the United $tates, but also an equally capitalist society. Pragmatist geopolitical considerations can

in no way guide the revolutionary advance of society on a consistent basis. Doing that requires knowledge of the mode of production.

The essay by Harpal Brar does the most to discuss the actual economic conditions in the USSR, but on the whole, none of the essays in the book systematically cover the factual situation of the mode of production in the USSR. One last essay worth mentioning is so stuck in the past, it still has not theoretically admitted that the bourgeoisie in the party – not landlords or imperialists outside the party – restored capitalism in the USSR. The Iniziativa Comunista (Italy) would appear to be one of those organizations too far brain-dead to make sense of current events: "While acknowledging the non-antagonistic character of the contradictions amongst the internal classes, we have to be conscious of the antagonistic relationship that exists between the socialist countries and their capitalist counterparts" (p. 302). Although Yeltsin joined the Soviet CP in 1961, the Italian Stalinists have the nerve to tell us that there were no internal contradictions with the enemy in the Soviet Union! Hello, hello, hello supposed Stalinists! It was not the landlord class or the imperialists or even the cultural intellectuals you mentioned who restored capitalism outright in the Soviet Union. It was Ramiz Alia, Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping, Khruschev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, Gorbachev and Yeltsin who restored capitalism – the bourgeoisie in the party. Not in a single case did the imperialists invade or the landlords rise up in armed struggle to restore capitalism.

Such supposed Stalinists we have to admit are like family to us. However, in every large family taken far enough, there is one retarded child, especially in the imperialist countries. Yes, we must uphold Stalin's last great work, the "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR." Without understanding this work, it is impossible to understand the material basis for capitalist restoration. However, historical events have left the supposed Stalinists behind. Some retarded children are left in special homes. Some live in the basement lacking the care they deserve and would receive under socialism. We hope for the best care for our Stalinists that medical science can deliver, but we have to move on with the issues, pay detailed attention to issues of the 21st century and not be stuck behind with the supposed Stalinists. Capitalism has ruined the mental and physical capacities of many people. "Bury the dead and return to the fight" also applies to the brain-dead.

Why "social-fascism" and "social-imperialism"

In 1993, Ludo Martens of the Belgian PTB attended a conference to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, a meeting very important in attempting to regroup Maoist parties, some of whom met for the first time and challenged each other with scientific issues not found in their own countries. At such a meeting, and indeed, at all international conferences of the moment, cardinal questions should be the order of the day.

It is often stated that for Mao Zedong, political line was merely a matter of intention. Nothing could be further from the truth. When Mao analyzed the superstructure and its

connection to the mode of production, he did so scientifically and giving full accord to the economic base's active role in determining the superstructure.

Today's neo-revisionist and Brezhnevite critics of Mao dovetail because of their underlying combination of Menshevik views. One component of Menshevism is anarchist idealism or nihilism when it comes to the state or leadership under socialism. When it suits them, these Mensheviks criticize power-holders for holding power! How remarkable! The Mensheviks have discovered that people hold power and have self-interests! Such infantilism underlies much of the criticism of Mao Zedong with regard to the Soviet Union and foreign affairs.

Since the Soviet Union called itself "socialist," but its mode of production was capitalist, Mao had no choice but to refer to the USSR as "social-imperialist." Even more problematically for the critics of Mao – who in many cases, such as Ludo Martens or the now defunct "Communist Workers Party" of the U$A and countless others, believed that the political leadership of the Soviet Union was degenerate under Khruschev and Brezhnev – the critics admit that the Soviet Union after 1956 was not a bourgeois democracy. So what was it? The Soviet Union was a dictatorship, but of what class and in what form? Once again, it is the mode of production that prevails in deciding the question. If the mode of production is capitalist, but the superstructure is not bourgeois democratic and in fact is openly dictatorial, then "social-fascist" is the right term. Not for nothing the Nazis also claimed to be "socialists," as a matter of historical coincidence.

In his 1993 speech, "Mao Zedong et Staline," Ludo Martens (like many others in the world before and since) raised this question in an opportunist way. He said that Mao opposed the Soviet Union and called it the main enemy for a spell, because of China's self-interests. Yet, here we are talking about something purely superstructural. Ludo Martens accuses Mao of "bourgeois nationalism," and connects that to what he considers the incorrect "social-imperialist" thesis, but what national bourgeoisie is he referring to? Certainly he is not referring to the bourgeoisie in the Chinese party which wanted to follow the path of Khruschev and Brezhnev. It was not their self-interests creating this "bourgeois nationalism." Then what is Ludo Martens talking about? He is talking about an idea detached from the mode of production, a nitpick if even 100% correct would have no business being raised as a cardinal question at an important conference marking Mao's 100th birthday. Mao Zedong did not own any means of production. China did not have a mode of production driving it toward incorrect foreign affairs positions. That is the cardinal issue at stake.

At most if we accept all of Ludo Martens's observations, some of which are historically jumbled (another subject for another date), we will prove that Mao made errors. These errors might even reach to the level of "deviation," but these errors would not change the fact that the Soviet Union was social-imperialist and social-fascist. Strategic and tactical calculations do not change the mode of production in the Soviet Union and Mao's errors

were unconnected to a capitalist mode of production in China. Errors are not of cardinal importance. All leaders will make errors: that is guaranteed.

To say Mao did something against the Soviet Union to protect his own power is the anarchist strain of Menshevism. Mature Marxist scientists become tired of learning that people hold power, a truism as true as the rising sun each morning until the day of communism established internationally. It's not interesting to us anymore to hear that people hold power.

We want to know about the mode of production, and the superficial nature of pseudo-Marxism stands exposed when geopolitics takes the main theoretical role in discussion. Geopolitics can only be the expression of underlying modes of production. If there are no capitalist relations of production there will be no imperialism, and that is the real cardinal question at hand, but Ludo Martens, the Workers World Party (USA), the Trotskyists, the defunct CWP and countless contributors in Ludo Martens's seminars held in Brussels with parties from around the world say that geopolitics is decisive. It's not just that Ludo Martens is saying political line scientifically arrived at is decisive. No, he and the other anti-Mao troopers are saying that geopolitics is decisive, and doing so, they seek to take us into a "lesser evils" world of foreign policy. In one of the few great errors in his life, W. E. B. Du Bois advised the Chinese in 1936 to abide by Japanese occupation as a lesser evil than European occupation and Mao subsequently proved that more was possible than this seemingly lesser evil. Yet, in 1936, Du Bois did not claim to be a scientific Marxist-Leninist yet. The geopolitical pragmatists masquerading as Marxist-Leninists have systematized Du Bois's error and have called it Marxism-Leninism.

Although Ludo Martens did catch onto the idea of the "new bourgeoisie in the party" from Mao Zedong, he never really confronted the mode of production in the USSR. In fact, he and his party in 1993 could be heard saying that there was no unemployment in revisionist China, when even the social-fascist regime there was admitting eight digit unemployment. That is how far removed from economic realities these geopolitics-is-decisive-folks are. If geopolitics or other sentiment demands it, these people are fully prepared to say there is no unemployment even when the regime in question does not say so. For this sort of superficial reason of geopolitics, Ludo Martens objected to the term "social-fascism." Since Stalin and Dimitrov had established that fascism is the rule of the most reactionary segments of the bourgeoisie and with no pretense of democracy or civil liberties, and since the USSR was capitalist, Mao had no choice within Marxism-Leninism other than to refer to the USSR as "social-fascist." Certainly it was not a bourgeois democratic society.

Like many others including many Trotskyists, Ludo Martens says that the leaders of the USSR were parasites on a mainly socialist economic foundation mostly in order to justify a certain easily understood line on foreign policy. "The socialist basis of society was not yet destroyed," he says in his essay called "Balance of the Collapse of the Soviet Union, April 2, 1992." A thing is always a unity of opposites, but one of the opposites is always principal.

Never is there complete purity, so that in a struggle in the worst situation – bourgeois prison for instance – even in such circumstances, the enemy does not obtain 100% of what it wants and the proletariat does not obtain 100% of what it wants. Hence, Ludo Martens wants to say that the economic base under Khruschev and Brezhnev was at least 51% socialist and somehow the superstructure was more reactionary and out of synch, so it needed to wait till Gorbachev to implement total capitalism. In this way, Ludo Martens justifies his and others' belief that Chinese foreign policy should have been pro-Brezhnev, if not in reasoning, then in substantial alliance. What it means is that Ludo Martens is willing to ape Trotsky on a disjunction between the Soviet mode of production and the state and hold to such an idealist analysis for a generation or two of the Soviet Union's existence, all so that he can defend a certain geopolitical approach that was popular in the 1960s to the 1980s and still exerts its influence on the minds of older revisionists Ludo Martens is seeking to reconcile with.

The problem with this understanding of having the superstructure out of synch with the mode of production for decades aside from its idealism and obvious Trotskyist origins – and this is true of his review of the USSR called "Balance of the Collapse of the Soviet Union, April 2, 1992" and his 1993 remarks at the Mao Centennial organized by Joma Sison – is that it presents the Stalin era as having no new bourgeois elements despite the victories of class struggle. Yes, Stalin won out against the bourgeois lines of Trotsky, Bukharin and Tito. Yes, collectivization went forward. Yes, World War II was won. It is our duty to defend all these gains under Stalin. Yet, at the same time, our current dialectical materialist understanding must be that the new bourgeoisie did not disappear. Quite the contrary, many of the necessities in fighting the war involved a material basis for the new bourgeoisie. It is the Hoxhaite metaphysical error to see victories and assume that they were won with the 100% purity of redness of the entire people. A word on the creation of the new bourgeoisie under Stalin is not to be found in Ludo Martens's discussion of cardinal subjects, only reference to the usual exploiters – the rich peasants, imperialist spies and so on that Stalin tended to.

Although we talk about many things in regard to Soviet history – Khruschev's "three peacefuls" and capitulation to imperialism for instance – there was only one factor needed to push the new bourgeoisie over the top from dominated to dominating, and that was Khruschev's loosening of the atmosphere in the party, his creation of the "dictatorship of the whole people." The moment when the bourgeoisie in the party knows it will no longer face a strong possibility of being violently repressed is the moment it takes charge, not because the superstructure is decisive mainly, but because the new bourgeoisie is already in a very good position and getting a good portion of what it wants even under socialism. Perhaps it is determining 35% of what is going on and goes to 51% or 70% with Khruschev's attack on Stalin. It is not a case that the new bourgeoisie started from nowhere and instantly became 51% as the Trotskyists like to caricaturize our views. So the superstructure is only decisive at a certain moment of time, that being the time when the new bourgeoisie no longer faces violent repression in the case of the USSR and China.

The bourgeoisie is not entirely "gutless." This view is a mistake. One only need witness various intra-bourgeois civil wars to know that the leaders of the capitalist class will take risks for their rule, (even though the oppressed classes do most of the fighting in civil wars) and such is even more true when fighting socialist rule on behalf of the whole capitalist class. Hence, it takes considerable violence to keep the capitalist class underfoot.

Anyone who has stopped to consider the careerists in the CPSU, anyone who has read any anecdotes or talked to any of the common people of the Soviet Union knows that the state and the means of production attract careerists like flies. Such people mouth communism at the proper moment, but everyone knows that they don't really know how or desire to apply communism in practice. These people protect their own interests and careers, but damage the interests of the proletariat, if they even know what they are since many have not studied politics in any systematic way. The only counterweight to such people in a society where there is yet a contradiction between leaders and led, the only counterweight to these careerists is violent repression, for they will certainly chance being criticized for implementing capitalism.

When a Khruschev comes to power almost by inertia (and only almost because he still did have to stage a coup), the reason is that the material situation of the bourgeoisie is already good. Layers and layers of the bureaucracy with access to the means of production in that peculiar superstructure known as socialism in the 20th century already exist ready and willing to follow and support a leader who will only "relax a bit," maybe focus on making some goulash and taking off his shoes in the UN.

As the bourgeoisie has centuries of training leaders behind it and propertied ruling classes more than centuries, and because there is a shortage of trained proletarian leaders, and also because it is not easy to discern those with genuine socialist conviction and those mouthing phrases at the appropriate moments, "democracy," "relaxation" and "free speech" become the excuses and battering rams of the new bourgeoisie seeking to oppress the proletariat in this era of imperialism. Once Khruschev erased the fear of a leader like Stalin, the new bourgeoisie implemented the things it always wanted to implement, and partially did implement under Stalin. The revisionists emphasize that it took more than a generation to restore capitalism, because they deny the role of force in history in addition to the fact that the new bourgeoisie does not have to start from scratch. The revisionists deny the role of Khruschev's coup and use of the military against Molotov and Stalin's other allies, and more importantly, they deny the role that the leadership has to play in violently repressing the would-be ruling bourgeoisie in the party, a group of people who do after all have access to the means of production once the government plans production under socialism (but not in the stages leading up to the socialist revolution unless there are base areas where the party is running the economy).

Conclusion

Recently we had a discussion with a member of the PTB who asked us about the band Rage against the Machine which had just done benefit concerts for Tibet. Ironically after discussing with us how many still put geopolitics above the mode of production, the PTB comrade asked why Rage did what it did. MIM answered that probably with all the watering down done by revisionism, no one ever talked to them about the mode of production. Hence, Rage against the Machine did not understand the advance over slavery that the communists including communist Tibetan slaves brought to Tibet. Instead Rage adopted simpler political ideas with regard to the national question. It's not surprising that people focused on geopolitics will have no real answer to the "human-rights" and "free speech" for slaveowners point of view and even bands like Rage will be unpersuaded. We do not defend Mao's work in Tibet just because the United $tates opposes it. The pseudo-Marxists consciously and unconsciously seeing geopolitics as decisive have led us down a pragmatist road to endless division and revisionism.

Unleashing the Revolutionary Movement

MC5 | 22 July 1997

from *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997*

> It is obligatory for a Marxist to count on European revolution if a *revolutionary situation* exists. It is the ABC of Marxism that the tactics of the socialist proletariat cannot be the same both when there is a revolutionary situation and when there is no revolutionary situation. – V.I. Lenin

In the last section, we examined the dialectical relationship between the expansion of labor aristocracy employment and the profit crisis to come. We showed that the revisionists without MIM's labor aristocracy thesis are on-board with the imperialists on the possibilities of "post-industrial capitalism," mainly because they fail to recognize that parasitism brings limited geographical political stability at the cost of the reduction of surplus-value extraction.

Again and again the CPUSA and others bash the foreign workers and back up Thurmond and Perot and then wonder why there is no communist movement in the United $tates. The flatterers tell the workers here how advanced they are and hide the truth of parasitism so as not to be unpopular. In contrast, we at MIM tell the bitter truth about the economy in the imperialist countries at the cost of our feel-good nationalist credentials with oppressor nation people. We have strategic confidence in main force for revolution in the Third World and do not require an imperialist country majority on our side for that confidence.

As we have shown already, the only thing that the CPUSA and other social-democrats can reap is the Buchananite movement. This is a consequence of a wrong scientific analysis of the class structure, which itself is a product of the class structure and its representatives called the labor bureaucracy. The same strategy and tactics applied where the class structure is one thing results in one kind of communist movement. In another situation with a different class structure, the same strategy and tactics unleash fascism.

The bottom-line for us in both our party work and united front work is no support for inter-imperialist rivalry and protectionism. This may be easy for our party members, but how do we tell those with more limited unity that we no longer foment inter-imperialist rivalry through protectionism, because it is dangerous and leads to fascist populist movements?

While Lenin thought the Amerikan and English communists had fairly accurate views of their societies' class structures, Lenin believed that the communists of Amerika and England are inclined to sectarianism. "In countries where there are *no* Social-Democratic workers'

parties, *no* Social-Democratic members of parliament, and *no* systematic and steadfast Social-Democratic policy either at elections or in the press, etc. – in such countries, Marx and Engels taught the socialists to rid themselves *at all cost* of narrow sectarianism, and *to join* with the working-class movement so as *to shake up* the proletariat *politically*."[1]

As MIM has emphasized in its propagation of materialism, it is no good to find fault and never find or unleash anything worth supporting. "We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, it is not easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion."[2]

After decrying the "narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous, and petty-bourgeois 'labour aristocracy' imperialist-minded, and imperialist-corrupted" in all italics and admitting it is much worse in the imperialist countries than in semi-imperialist Russia, Lenin still insists communists "work wherever the masses are to be found,"[3] including their reactionary trade unions. Almost as a maneuver to test discipline of the COMINTERN and against sectarianism, Lenin forced this on the English and U.$. comrades against the wishes of what he admitted was the majority of his fine revolutionary friends in those societies. Some think that MIM must disagree with this idea that comrades must work everywhere, but it has always been MIM's practice. If we could win a Congress seat, we would fight for it. If we find a comrade has a particular idea of a particular reactionary organization or movement to infiltrate, we do not oppose it. We only oppose those who go to the labor-aristocracy and recycle the demands of the petty-bourgeoisie. No, we can and must go everywhere to prepare the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, but we must maintain proletarian internationalist aims and principles. In Lenin's own estimate at the time, the anarchist people expressing repulsion at the labor aristocracy in the IWW and similar U.$. organizations are making errors that "will be a thousand times easier"[4] to fight than those still tied up with the labor aristocracy. For MIM, this is a reminder of how we have more in common with J. Sakai and similar anarchists than the various so-called communists not breaking with the labor aristocracy.

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "Preface to F. Sorge Correspondence," *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 373.
[2] V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 50.
[3] Ibid., p. 53. He defines the masses as proletarian and semi-proletarian, which in some readings of his work would exclude the traditional petty-bourgeoisie. He apparently does not expect comrades to go to meetings or organizations of the traditional petty-bourgeoisie or labor-aristocracy, which only brings us around right back to the original scientific question, who is proletarian and who is labor aristocracy? Without a precise analysis of the class structure, it is useless to proceed into strategic and tactical squabbles.

In any case, MIM is further anti-ultraleft than Lenin, because Lenin apparently would have agreed not to pursue the petty-bourgeoisie, but since we in the imperialist countries are often in situations where it is difficult not to be confronting a petty-bourgeois majority, we will throw aside Lenin's reservations on this and keep to the spirit of opposing sectarianism by getting out into the imperialist countries.
[4] V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 231.

Lenin never says in his critique of ultra-leftism that we must pander to the labor aristocracy, only that we must struggle with the backward workers in order to avoid sectarianism.

> Crispien went on to speak of high wages. The position in Germany, he said, is that the workers are quite well off compared with the workers in Russia or in general, in the East of Europe. A revolution, as he sees it, can be made only if it does not worsen the workers' conditions 'too much.' Is it permissible, in a Communist Party, to speak in a tone like this, I ask? This is the language of counter-revolution. . . . The workers' victory cannot be achieved without sacrifices, without a temporary deterioration of their conditions. We must tell the workers the very opposite of what Crispien has said. If, in desiring to prepare the workers for the dictatorship, one tells them that their conditions will not be worsened 'too much,' one is losing sight of the main thing, namely, that it was by helping their 'own' bourgeoisie to conquer and strangle the whole world by imperialist methods, with the aim of thereby ensuring better pay for themselves, that the labor aristocracy developed. If the German workers now want to work for the revolution they must make sacrifices, and not be afraid to do so. . . .
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> To tell the workers in the handful of rich countries where life is easier, thanks to imperialist pillage, that they must be afraid of 'too great' impoverishment, is counter-revolutionary. It is the reverse that they should be told. The labour aristocracy that is afraid of sacrifices, afraid of 'too great' impoverishment during the revolutionary struggle, cannot belong to the Party. Otherwise, the dictatorship is impossible, especially in West-European countries.[5]

Hence, we must imagine what we would do at a meeting of a reactionary union discussing NAFTA or GATT. Many of our critics would go and fly the flag. We would go and put forward internationalist demands. In particular, what does a positive reform look like at this historical moment of imperialism? Some said for example that the United $tates should not join NAFTA, because free trade means the abolition or non-enforcement of laws protecting the environment. In 1991, under GATT, Mexico fought the United $tates and won the right to sell tuna to the United $tates that Mexican fishers obtained while killing dolphins in their nets. The U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act had banned tuna fishing that could endanger dolphins. For reasons of this sort, MIM was told we should oppose GATT and NAFTA and

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[5] V. I. Lenin, "Speech on the Terms of Admission into the Communist International July 30," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960), pp. 248-9.

Similar quotes how it is not just a matter of telling the leaders and purging the leaders but of aggressively telling the workers too about the labor aristocracy appear in "Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 563: "Without the destruction of every trace of its prestige among workers, without convincing the masses of the utter bourgeois corruption of this stratum, there can be no question of a serious communist workers' movement. This applies to Britain, France, America and Germany."

take up economic nationalism.[6] The reasoning is that it is easier to fight for progressive laws inside one country.

MIM believes that kind of reasoning leads to more wars. If Mexico or other Third World countries can go to socialism and protect their nascent industries, that is one thing, and we should do everything possible to support whatever economic relationship they want to the imperialist countries. Asking an imperialist country to take up economic nationalism is another thing. Instead, we should aim our economic demands to be sure they have an internationalist spin.

In the European Union, Loukas Tsoukalis says that the membership of some countries has meant a rising of environmental regulation in order to be part of the club.[7] Thus, we see no reason to take a fatalistic approach to struggle in multi-lateral situations.

MIM does not want Mexico to shoulder the burden of losing its tuna fishing business. We want the imperialist countries to hand over the nets and technology to make it possible to fish without killing the dolphins. That is the general formula for environmental demands when they concern the Third World. If the imperialist countries want higher environmental standards, and they should, let them pay for it. Already they do this within the European Union where some countries pay for the use of less-polluting production techniques by poorer countries. If the whole world lived U.$. living standards, the species would probably die instantly from pollution, so it is clear the U.$. people owe the world for their system. "It is epic hypocrisy for Americans to scold the poor for destroying nature while U.S. companies are still free to dump toxic wastes from American consumption in poor countries. If they intend to reform the world, America and other advanced nations have to take care of their own mess first."[8] The bourgeois economists think their free trade is more efficient? Well, let them use those efficiency gains to improve the environment and inequality between the Third World and imperialist countries.

It is no longer progressive to fight for "30 for 40" in the imperialist countries, because those workers are not exploited. However, the demand for a global minimum wage is still entirely progressive and does not increase the existing world war by encouraging imperialist country nationalism. It is the only way to keep imperialists from playing one country off against another into ever lower wages. Professor Voradvidh of Thailand has it right: "We need a GATT on labor conditions and on the minimum wage, we need a standard on the minimum conditions for work and a higher standard for children."[9]

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[6] Miles Kahler, *International Institutions and the Political Economy of Integration* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995), p. 73.
[7] Loukas Tsoukalis, *The New European Economy Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 262.
[8] William Greider, *One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997),
p. 460.
[9] Ibid., p. 357.

We communists and our allies in the united front should push for it and ask for WTO enforcement. Unions seeking to obtain wages higher than minimum wage should get to go before the WTO. Countries that use death squads against union organizers would be kicked out of GATT. In order to make sure these reforms do not result in a decrease in developing country employment, we should also push for currency reform.

Third World currencies are all radically undervalued, because of the politics of comprador government. To remove the influence of politics and speculation, we like the suggestion of one economist from India – Arjun Makhijani – who says we should peg currencies to a basket of goods needed for daily living in each country. That basket of goods should be the same price in each country no matter what currency it is purchased in.

Such a currency reform combined with a minimum wage boost carried out globally would do much to spur the most possible out of capitalism. Third World purchasing power would increase drastically. That would spur Third World industry and make possible cheaper imports of whatever equipment was necessary. The labor aristocracy would suffer higher prices of its Third World imports, but it is already under the impression that the imports from the Third World do not matter to them anyway, so let them prove it by going along. The other benefits to the labor aristocracy is that the combined currency reform and minimum wage would hugely boost global employment. The unused capacity of imperialist countries would be quickly taken up with the orders from the Third World. As a result, the "middle classes" of imperialism would see a decrease in living standard from higher import prices, but they would see an elimination of unemployment and overcapacity. The imperialists should be happy to see increased demand and a disappearance of over-capacity, perhaps for a few decades.

The major loser in a WTO-enforced minimum wage, a WTO-enforced union negotiating regulation, a WTO-enforced environmentalism, a WTO-enforced tax on financial asset income and a WTO/IMF-enforced currency reform would be the comprador elites of the Third World. Their power would be sidestepped in one fell swoop by the imperialists who would take away their power to set currency rates and wages. On the other hand, the comprador elites would receive a major windfall themselves in exchange: their holdings of local currency would suddenly be worth much more in goods from the imperialist countries. This would also undercut the value of shipping capital out of the country to deposit in Swiss bank accounts. The compradors would be able to enjoy their bourgeois lifestyles without sending their money out of the country. We suspect that at least a portion of the elite would go over to becoming a regular and strong national bourgeoisie involved in expanding production.

The imperialist countries through the use of GATT have the power to impose global conditions. It also means they can be targeted as enemy simultaneously. This is not something we communists should fear. It means we can take down the system in one fell swoop. In the past, Lenin derided economism for talking about economic concessions from

individual capitalists only and never rising to the political level and making demands of the capitalist class a whole. In the imperialist countries, Lenin called it "imperialist economism," and today we still see that most so-called communists would prefer to fight it out at the individual company and individual country level.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is already trying to fool the international proletariat that it is doing something about the real goals of the international proletariat. "The Administration has sought establish a framework for multilateral discussion on how best to promote core labor standards: freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, nondiscrimination in the workplace, prohibition of forced labor, and elimination of exploitative child labor."[10]

The GATT is building the muscle of our proletarian internationalist movement and we should thank the imperialists for this chance to exercise our muscles as proletarian internationalists. As of now, the influence of parties like MIM is weak, so our movement is so weak that it wants to go back to economic nationalism. That is the mistake we face, one leading to fascism and inter-imperialist war. Instigating inter-imperialist war should be a last resort, as a threat when the WTO or the like imposes more government control on oppressed nations in a new form of outright colonialism. There is a need for international conferences on just this subject to discuss subjects like picking off one imperialist country or another to form a bloc with in order to undercut new global colonial arrangements. MIM has its own opinions on the subject, but questions of blocs and alliances should be decided by the Maoist majority of the Third World and we imperialist country comrades should be careful to collect information and not boast overly about our possibilities of overthrowing the governments and thereby leading Third World comrades to count on something not real.

The damage of the wrong analysis of the class structure is also evident when we look at the movements of the most oppressed, because nationalism of oppressed nations is applied internationalism as Mao said. The Black Panthers proved that the correct analysis of the labor aristocracy does the most to advance the movement here in the imperialist countries. The difference between the pro-labor aristocracy line and imperialist assimilationism is non-existent at this time. Movements to stir up imperialist country economic nationalism have the disadvantage of dragging along a portion of the internal semi-colonies. This bring us to the next question – the future of the communist movement.

[10] *Economic Report of the President,* Chapter 7, 1997.

Tasks and Stages of the Revolution

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from *Imperialism and Its Class Structure in 1997*

> In the various nations of the West there is a great obstacle to carrying through any revolution and construction movement; i.e., the poisons of the bourgeoisie are so powerful that they have penetrated each and every corner. While our bourgeoisie has had, after all, only three generations, those in England and France have had a 250-300 year history of development, and their ideology and modus operand have influenced all aspects and strata of their societies. Thus the English working class follows the Labour Party, not the Communist Party. Lenin says, "The transition from capitalism to socialism will be more difficult for a country the more backward it is." This would seem incorrect today. – Mao Zedong

The correct scientific analysis of class structure and crisis in the imperialist countries is not only critical from the point of view of unleashing whatever movement is possible and appropriate right now. It is also important in terms of the future under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Comintern of 1920 said, "Without exposing this evil, without fighting not only against the trade union bureaucracy but also against all petty-bourgeois manifestations of the craft and labour aristocracy, without the ruthless expulsion of the representatives of this attitude from the revolutionary party, without calling in the lower strata, the broad masses, the real majority of the exploited, there can be no talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[1]

The task of the Cultural Revolution after the initial socialist revolution is to consolidate the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. That is how a country stays on the socialist road and advances toward communism if international conditions are ripe enough.

The masses are correct not to support any party that claims that the land of the Rodney King and Vincent Chin verdicts is ready for integration. The masses are correct to hate and

[1] Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International: 1919-1943 Documents*, Vol. I (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971), p. 78. This was adopted from Lenin's own published work of March, 1920, "Draft (or Theses) of the R.C.P.'s Reply," *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 343. The same page of the Lenin document explains that if the comrades in Switzerland, Britain, France and the U.$.A. do not use illegal methods of work in combination with legal ones, there will be no revolutionary party. This stands as an answer to those bourgeois democrats calling on MIM to operate completely in the open.

distrust any party that puts forward such nonsense as how the white worker is going to suddenly wake up and become peaceful and full of brotherly internationalist love. When the white worker does wake up, s/he may fight for reaction first, but even in the best of circumstances, s/he will have to go through a long period of thought reform before peaceful internationalist integration is even thinkable, and not just a sham foisted on the masses by the imperialists interested in assimilation and stability. Even some of the oppressed nation workers infected with white nation chauvinism or parallel ideas will demonstrate great difficulties in waking up.

One cannot fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, if one does not know what the proletariat is. For this reason alone, the many who suggest to MIM that its differences with others calling themselves Maoist in the imperialist countries are merely tactical are incorrect. Without MIM's cardinal principle on the oppressor nation working class, dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

Even when the Third World proletariat makes its weight felt and U.$. imperialism is overthrown, it is still possible for the proletariat to make disastrous errors without an understanding of the tasks and stages of revolution in the imperialist countries. Such errors surely have the potential of leading to a restoration not just of capitalism in the ex-imperialist countries but of imperialism. A restoration of imperialism threatens all the world's people, because for example, the United $tates is the principal enemy of the world's peoples. In many ways, the initial overthrow of U.$. imperialism will be an act of defense by the world's oppressed peoples, self-defense with regard to the right to live without imperialist militarism, starvation, inadequate health care and pollution. Yet, if the revolution starts and ends with defensive goals, there will be no transformation, and hence there will be an increased risk of imperialist restoration. For this reason, it is impermissible to speak of the class structure as a merely abstract issue that can be sidestepped with the tactics of flattery. Just as in every other country, the class structure of the United $tates will determine what the tasks of the revolution are. When imperialist country opportunists sidestep a concrete understanding of the class structure of parasitism, they are sidestepping the future tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Did not Mao say feudalism and colonialism were like mountains that had to be removed from the backs of the Chinese people? In order to remove the weight of imperialism from the backs of the world's peoples, the revolution must now go through its own special stage in the imperialist countries. We will refer to this stage as the re-civilization stage. It will complete some tasks parallel to the new democratic revolution but in the oppressor nations and with no capitalist ownership of the means of production. In particular the oppressor nations will have to come to grips with why it was that the oppressed nations needed a new democratic stage and what things like the civil rights movement were, including how they were twisted by the oppressor nations into assimilationist movements. During the re-civilization stage, the ex-oppressor nation will live without the power to oppress oppressed

nations and come to understand why independent national courts and police among other things were necessary for the oppressed nations. In the re-civilization stage, the ex-oppressor nation will come to respect the military and political might of the world's majority. Instead of sending UN troops to Iraq, Somalia and Kampuchea, the proletarian dictatorship will send troops from Somalia, Iraq and Kampuchea to patrol the imperialist countries held in receivership during the re-civilization stage. As Mao said, these tasks alone would make the socialist transition more difficult in the advanced countries than in the backward countries. Yet even this does not describe in full all the difficulties of socialist transition in imperialist countries that are already apparent.

When Lenin originally wrote about the labor aristocracy's returning to the proletariat, he believed that world war would bring about European revolution in his lifetime. On the other hand, he was prepared to admit the possibility that it might not happen in his lifetime if militarism and super-exploitation managed to convert the workers of certain imperialist countries into a petty-bourgeoisie.

The consolidation of the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries has several implications for the socialist stage of revolution in imperialist countries:

1. Nowhere will racial integration be the direct goal, because the oppressor nation people will not be ready for integration until after some generations have passed. For a strategic length of time the oppressor nation people will undergo thought reform to prepare for re-entry into humyn relations with other peoples.

2. Oppressor nation people will generally not hold the predominant roles in the administration of oppressed nation affairs even in the event of transitional Soviet forms of government.

3. There is a high likelihood that the labor aristocracy will never be re-proletarianized before communism is achieved.

4. Reparations will be necessary to undercut Titoism in which people who happen to live on top of gold mines, oil wells or other sources of wealth do not have their wealth re-distributed in the name of "local control."

5. Reparations will be necessary not just as justice to the Third World but to undercut the material basis for oppressor nation chauvinism including the mythology of oppressor nation "productivity." Just as children raised only seeing Blacks as slaves cannot be expected to have a well-rounded perspective of the Black people, a child raised in a society where ex-oppressor nation workers work with several times more capital at their disposal than oppressed nation workers cannot be expected to understand the real reason for a difference in "productivity" between nations. The

question of reparations is one central item to the necessity of an historical stage in which the oppressor nation peoples are cleansed of parasitism. Thought reform by itself will be futile for the oppressor nation if the economic basis of parasitic thinking is not destroyed.

Again on the Subject of the Masses in the Imperialist Countries

MC5 | 19 April 2001

Most calling themselves "Marxist" continue to misapply Marxism to today's conditions. There are opportunists changing the definition of "proletariat" and abandoning the labor theory of value – usually without explicitly saying so. There are also dogmatists who quote from Lenin more than 75 years ago in Russia on conditions in imperialist countries today, when Lenin himself never quoted someone from 75 years prior to him on conditions in Russia in his day.

One of the trickiest forms of opportunism and dogmatism stems from the concept of the "masses." Many opportunists use this word to turn Mao into a bourgeois democratic populist. Others use it to justify failing to analyze conditions of today, since the masses everywhere must be revolutionary and exploited forever, or so the dogmatist reasons, and so we do not even have to apply the definition of "masses" today.

In contrast, MIM has said that in the imperialist countries, the population cannot be the principal source of rational knowledge of proletarian politics. This should be obvious from the lack of socialist history or revolutionary class struggle in the imperialist countries. Nonetheless, MIM finds itself having to defend itself against those who do not know how carefully Marx, Lenin and Mao defined the words "proletariat" and "masses" and how they used them in their context. In particular, there are no timeless "tactics" that apply to the "masses" for all times and places. In this essay, we will distinguish between "population" and "masses."

It is not a mistake that a more "top-down" approach to rational-knowledge is more necessary the higher the percentage of parasites in a population. That is only another way of saying that when behind enemy lines, we communists do not simply ape the enemy in all ways. We are not fish in the sea seeking to blend in with the enemy population when we are behind enemy lines.

Historically, in Mao's China, there were people who did have to work behind enemy lines, to fight the Japanese or Chiang Kai-shek. There were two main communist complaints about those people who worked behind enemy lines. First, of course, was that such people became so muted that they became indistinguishable from the enemy, the basic problem of working behind enemy lines. (See for example, Mao's 1944 essay, "Our Study and the Current

Conditions"). Secondly was that once victorious in revolution, the communists who worked behind enemy lines continued to use the same methods they used when behind enemy lines – excessive conspiracy, lack of reliance on the population and even a lack of outspokenness.

In explaining the Bolshevik differences with Menshevism, Lenin says that worker "masses" are only in the "thousands" in "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back." In fact, Lenin says that in the beginning of the revolutionary movement, the reference point of the struggle in the use of the word "masses" is only a few thousand people! The following very long quote from a Comintern speech at the Third Congress addressing many imperialist country comrades mentions all the key issues:

> We must prepare for dictatorship, and this consists in combating such phrases and such amendments. (Laughter.) Throughout, our theses speak of the masses. But, comrades, we need to understand what is meant by masses. The German Communist Workers' Party, the Left-wing comrades, misuse this word. But Comrade Terracini, too, and all those who have signed these amendments, do not know how the word "masses" should be read.
>
> I have been speaking too long as it is; hence I wish to say only a few words about the concept of 'masses.' It is one that changes in accordance with the changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses. If the party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it also succeeds in arousing non-party people, it is well on the way to winning the masses. During our revolutions there were instances when several thousand workers represented the masses. In the history of our movement, and of our struggle against the Mensheviks, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly mass character to the movement. You have a mass when several thousand non-party workers, who usually live a philistine life and drag out a miserable existence, and who have never heard anything about politics, begin to act in a revolutionary way. If the movement spreads and intensifies, it gradually develops into a real revolution. We saw this in 1905 and 1917 during three revolutions, and you too will have to go through all this. When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept 'masses' becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses. This word begins to denote something else. The concept of 'masses' undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is impermissible for a revolutionary, and any other sense of the word becomes incomprehensible. It is possible that even a small party, the British or American party, for example, after it has thoroughly studied the course of political development and become acquainted with the life and customs of the non-party masses, will at a favourable moment evoke a revolutionary movement (Comrade

> Radek has pointed to the miners' strike as a good example). You will have a mass movement if such a party comes forward with its slogans at such a moment and succeeds in getting millions of workers to follow it. I would not altogether deny that a revolution can be started by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion. But one must have a knowledge of the methods by which the masses can be won over. For this thoroughgoing preparation of revolution is essential. But here you have comrades coming forward with the assertion that we should immediately give up the demand for 'big' masses.
>
> They must be challenged. Without thoroughgoing preparation you will not achieve victory in any country. Quite a small party is sufficient to lead the masses. At certain times there is no necessity for big organisations.
>
> But to win, we must have the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always essential; but what is essential to win and retain power is not only the majority of the working class – I use the term 'working class' in its West-European sense, i.e., in the sense of the industrial proletariat – but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you thought about this?

Historically as a concrete reference point, in 1894, Lenin was giving tactical respect to an enemy that had no army but commanded a few thousand readers and some libraries! Lenin said, "However, it should not be forgotten that these slanderers command all the material means for the most widespread propaganda of their slanders. They possess a magazine with a circulation of several thousand; they have reading-rooms and libraries at their disposal" ("What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats").

Concretely, MIM is fortunate to have Lenin's writings to know that MIM does indeed surpass Lenin at his earliest stages organizationally, while we too would have to give tactical respect to the type of enemy that faced Lenin in 1894. While Lenin in his day and MIP-Amerika both have large territories to cover, MIM today distributes articles in the five and six digits every month just on its web site alone. Lenin did not have this and his newspaper in the early 1890s was not physically superior to MIM's in quantity; although we may certainly surmise that his literature gathered greater passion from the population, and perhaps more people handed his newspapers on than MIP-Amerika's, thus meaning more readers per newspaper. Furthermore, MIM's prison struggle and prison readership alone is reminiscent of Lenin's reference point of a few thousand people in early stages of struggle. Hence, anyone comparing MIM with Lenin on the "masses" and finding MIM lacking just did not read Lenin very carefully.

Lenin remembered bitterly in his "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," the "reformists" who called him "sectarian" for having only a few hundred organizers and a few thousand people as a reference point. The Liberal leader Struve led the attack along these lines; yet today,

people continue to attack MIM along the exact same lines. Lenin stood his ground and believed even such a small element constituted "revolutionary people."

Even in 1915, two years before the revolution, Lenin says he only had 40,000 subscribers. He made a point of saying that the tzar could repress 5 or 10 times that number and still the 40,000 would not be annihilated in influence. ("What has been revealed by the trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Duma Group").

MIM points to Lenin's precise conception of masses to refute those trying to pull us in a bourgeois populist direction about what our real political roots are and how science is actually applied. It goes without saying that a party of millions can address hundreds of millions of people, but at earlier stages of revolutionary development the word "masses" can be demagogy, a kind of god that supports nihilism or reformism.

Somehow, with the international proletariat's luck in drawing enemies in imperialist countries, the Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists such as Avakian criticizing us "Lin Biaoists" manage to foul up the word "masses" from another angle, by denigrating the exploited and oppressed masses of the Third World. Against these Trotskyists, the term "masses" must be defended. On the other hand, within the imperialist countries we get the social-democrats and other left-wing elements of parasitism trying to have us worship the enemy population as "masses." Both ultra-purist Trotskyists and reformist left-wing elements of parasitism use the term "masses" only to denigrate the Third World oppressed and exploited while glorifying the labor aristocracy.

Mensheviks have made too much of Lenin's and Stalin's relative distrust of the population compared with Mao's. Lenin said in *What Is To Be Done?* that Russia was a "politically enslaved state, in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the population are corrupted to the marrow of their bones by political subservience." For this reason, he thought it might be defensible to have a communist party which commanded loyalty and obedience to itself instead of the state. Thus, some Mensheviks think that for Lenin to say what he did about the labor aristocracy is not surprising, while Mao was more friendly to the "masses," which includes the labor aristocracy by this line of Menshevik reasoning.

Yet, we must remember that Lenin lived in a semi-imperialist country, one that had "Great Power" status at the time Lenin lived. Mao lived in a country that once had "Great Power" status but was in fact super-exploited and oppressed. Hence, we can say Mao was correct to have more reliance on the population of China than we have on the population of the United $tates or Lenin had in Russia's population.

This is to leave aside the fact that Mao was careful in defining the word "masses." When he says "mass line," it is not an excuse for spontaneity or bourgeois democratic prejudice. Mao's "mass line" is universally correct, but only if it is universally correctly defined and applied.

Here in the imperialist countries we often fail from step one – defining friends and enemies based on the appropriation of surplus-labor, which is the connection between Marx's *Das Kapital* and the political theories of Lenin and Mao. Political theorizing and strategizing in a void without Marx's labor theory of value is rank opportunism, creating a bourgeois political philosophy of a pre-scientific sort, whether or not it is in the guise of Marxism. There is no meaning to political steering or tactics without the labor theory of value, so any discussion of "ultraleft" or "right opportunism" is completely sterile without an understanding of concrete conditions first. There is nothing permanently politically ultraleft or right opportunist without first defining classes and hence friends and enemies.

Mao himself defined the classes in Chinese society, and specifically Chinese society, in order to define "friend" and "enemy." In his *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society* in 1926, Mao talks about many things that are specific to China and even more things that are specific only to semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries. He did not talk about all masses in all countries being the same at all times.

Even in the essay "On New Democracy," which is not relevant for imperialist country oppressor nations, Mao said, "No sooner had the strength of the proletariat and of the peasant and other petty bourgeois masses brought the revolution of 1927 to victory than the capitalist class, headed by the big bourgeoisie, kicked the masses aside, seized the fruits of the revolution, formed a counter-revolutionary alliance with imperialism and the feudal forces, and strained themselves to the limit in a war of 'Communist suppression' for ten years." Here, Mao contrasted the masses and the enemy. Most references to the "masses" by Lenin, Stalin and Mao speak of "exploited," "toiling," "working" or "oppressed" masses – not masses that include substantial enemy sections.

During the Cultural Revolution in China, the *Little Red Book* said the following: "The broad masses of the workers, peasants and soldiers and the broad ranks of the revolutionary cadres and the intellectuals should really master Mao Tse-tung's thought." Again, we do not hear the term "masses" used to refer to enemies.

In another context, in his essay, "Speeches at a National Party Conference" in 1955, Mao said, "We often say that we should not become conceited because we have done well in our work and that we comrades should remain modest and learn from the advanced countries, from the masses and from each other so as to make fewer mistakes." Again, as MIM has always said, there is a distinction to be drawn here. Mao did not lump "the advanced countries" with "masses" here. Let's also keep in mind he could have said, "learn from the masses of the advanced countries" and he did not. It's not so simple. There are things to learn from enemies, but we do not refer to it as part of the "mass line," with "from the masses" and "to the masses."

In truth, if once in a while, "masses" referred to people that included enemies it would not be so bad – if the enemy component of "masses" is the minority. Such was the case in times

during the war against Japan led by Mao. Both Mao and Chiang Kai-shek spoke of the "entire nation" opposing Japan – and for a decisive period of time the conflict with Japanese imperialism was the principal contradiction for the Chinese Revolution. Yet, contrary to the image some would like to foist concerning Mao, Mao was even more precise than just counting a few enemies as "masses."

In "Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?" Mao said in 1963 what he would later say about the USSR. Some people do not realize that Mao never counted the "labor aristocracy" as anything but enemy: "It shows us that not only is it possible for a working-class party to fall under the control of a labour aristocracy, degenerate into a bourgeois party and become a flunkey of imperialism before it seizes power." Furthermore, Mao said, "Old-line revisionism arose as a result of the imperialist policy of buying over and fostering a labour aristocracy. Modern revisionism has arisen in the same way. Sparing no cost, imperialism has now extended the scope of its operations and is buying over leading groups in socialist countries and pursues through them its desired policy of 'peaceful evolution'." Hence, Mao always said the question of labor aristocracy is linked to the question of the restoration of capitalism. For a supposed Maoist to ignore the "labor aristocracy" of the imperialist countries is revisionism. For people to talk about upholding the Cultural Revolution and opposing Soviet revisionism without opposing the labor aristocracy as enemy is just pure hogwash.

In this regard, we must note the revisionist efforts of many to smuggle the labor aristocracy into the "masses," and then the "mass line," as an excuse for tailing parasitic demands by the imperialist country parasites. MIM follows the "mass line," but the population does not get to define whether or not it is "masses" or not. MIM uses the definition of "proletariat" and "masses" laid down since Marx and Lenin. Belonging to the "masses" or the "proletariat" is not a question of self-identification. We do not mean conditions are the same as in the days of Marx and Lenin, but it does mean we have no reason to change the very definition of these words, since capitalism and semi-feudalism continue to dominate the world. People who believe MIM is wrong are free to argue that the proletariat of 2001 is less relevant than in 1901, but our critics should not be allowed to change the definition of proletariat and "masses" to include a majority of enemies.

Pitfalls of Single Issue Organizing

MC5 and MC17
Revised September 1995
by MCB52 and MC234

In recruiting anti-imperialists, anti-militarists and other activists to the party, MIM encounters a very common set of questions, especially among students. Many ask about the "effectiveness" of putting out MIM's line when only the most politically advanced will join the Party. Because they do not see work within MIM as effective, often activists will not want to work within MIM when they can work within reformist single-issue groups or other mass organizations.

First, we need a definition of terms. A single-issue group is a political organization that focuses on one issue – e.g., apartheid or abortion. Sometimes MIM uses the phrase "single-issue group" interchangeably with "mass organization." Members in single or multi-issue mass organizations support a range of political views and do not specifically uphold a worked out universal ideology, such as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. In other words, a mass organization is not a front group for another political organization, such as a supposed communist party or the Moonie Church.

Another type of organization accepts the leadership and the line of a different organization. MIM started two such Party-led organizations: the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL) and MIM Supporters Group (MSG). Different than the Party, RAIL and MSG members are not required to uphold MIM's three dividing line principles; voting members must not have a worked-out line against them. People join RAIL because they want to do general anti-imperialist work, and they join MSG because they support our politics but are not yet ready politically or they refuse to make the personal sacrifices necessary for MIM membership. MIM considers it opportunist and dishonest not to explain openly that an organization is led by another or its line. Leadership and influence from another organization should not be hidden from the membership of the organization or from the masses.

The terms "mass organization" and "single issue group" are used to connote organizations that are part of mass movements. The distinction is important because while MIM may lead mass movements, MIM does not seek to lead mass organizations.

Do revolutionaries hold back mass orgs?

Questions of MIM's role and leadership in mass organizations tend to arise in the context of volunteer mass organizations as well as organizations having professional leadership like NOW or the NAACP. The argument given is usually that revolutionaries will be able to exert pressure on the organization, moving it further to the left. Thus, through the organization, they will be gaining greater concessions from the existing power structure, while at the same time, by pushing the organization to the left, they hope to slowly radicalize its membership as well.

There are several problems with this argument. First, if the goal is to gain greater concessions from the government or power structure without changing who's in power, the strategy is usually to build a group with the greatest numbers and most funding possible. Certainly the best way to do this is to create as broad a coalition of people as possible and, just as certainly, radical politics are going to reduce the number of people willing to work for or donate to a given cause. This is not to say that revolutionaries and radicals do not play a significant role in influencing mass movements, but rather to argue that their role should be outside of these more liberal- minded organizations.

Some people working in these groups recognize this problem but argue that radical politics put more pressure on the government and so radicals should still stay in these groups. But when working within the system in these organizations a radical voice is not one that gains popular support. Non-revolutionaries often correctly perceive that their single-issue goals are middle-class in nature and are in fact obstructed by the revolutionaries in the mass organizations. Because the Amerikan government does respond sometimes to middle class unrest when it feels threatened, what reformist mass organizations need to say on television is not that we need a revolution, but that the government is not playing nice and it needs to give us this little concession and then things will be OK.

Selling your revolutionary politics short

No one is disputing that reforms can and do improve the lives of some people. But by working in these organizations for these reforms, potential revolutionaries are forced to sacrifice their politics or risk alienation. In making this sacrifice they are supporting, dishonestly, politics they truly do not endorse. Telling people to Boycott Folgers (once boycotted in connection to the struggle in El Salvador), for example, says to people that all you have to do is make this sacrifice and people will stop dying in El Salvador, never even mentioning the larger role imperialism plays. By supporting these principles, they are missing the opportunity to present to people what truly needs to be done to improve the living conditions of all people. People who could have become revolutionaries instead work for dead-end politics or drop out of politics because they were never adequately challenged to move on to a more worked-out position on how social change is possible.

Many still argue sacrificing revolutionary goals is necessary to radicalize people one step at a time. The idea that people need to be exposed to politics in slow, increasingly radical stages unfortunately holds true for many in this country at this time. This view amounts to white middle-class chauvinism, as white middle-class people may be slow to develop politically, but that is not the problem with all people. Some revolutionary-minded people, particularly from oppressed groups, will not take a second look at a group mixed up in dead-end reformist politics.

Revolutionaries who choose to support reformism instead of working with MIM sell themselves and the masses short. In addition to weakening the reformist movement from within, they also fail to strengthen the real incentive for government concessions--a strong revolutionary movement. At this time, MIM isn't as strong as we could be, precisely because people who should be in MIM devote themselves instead to reformism.

Many of the demands of mass organizations are correct, but those who already recognize the systemic nature of problems and are revolutionaries should step up to revolutionary work. That's the best way to radicalize the masses as we make strides forward.

Why MIM and MIM members don't join mass organizations

MIM and it's members are often invited to join various mass organizations. We refuse, because membership in other organizations leads in only two directions: watering down our politics for the sake of unity, or risking splitting the mass organization over political issues it wouldn't split over by itself. Mass organizations may have less worked out politics, but they do a have a progressive role to play, bringing people into politics, letting people explore issues, taking leadership roles, radicalizing people, and so on. MIM wants to preserve this progressive quality while influencing the group and its members in the most productive way possible.

The most important reason MIM has not worked in leadership roles in mass organizations is its understanding of the historical experience of the most important student organization in the 1960s, Students for a Democratic Society.

Students for a Democratic Society

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which once included hundreds of thousands of white students, offers relevant experiences in the question of mass organizations and their relationships to supposed vanguard parties. Although SDS was a multi-issue organization, it came to focus on the Vietnam War and had the classic single-issue approach of not insisting on a completely worked out line within its organization. SDS was also vastly more successful in terms of size, energy and radicalism than all the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist organizations of today put together. For all these reasons, it is important to draw conclusions from the experience of SDS, principally its collapse into factions. This disintegration offers

activists in North America the most important negative experience in the history of relationships between vanguard organizations and mass organizations.

What was in the early 1960s the vanguard party in the United States, the Progressive Labor Party (PL), infiltrated SDS. It was partly a secret process and largely an open process. PL members became full members of SDS, taking up many of the important leadership roles. PL eventually split and destroyed SDS and then destroyed itself. By pushing its agenda on the group, PL scared off many people and forced those who remained into factional infighting. This effectively kept the group from bringing anymore new people into politics while at the same time scaring off or dividing those who were already involved.

One fear MIM regularly encounters from radicals is that quitting leadership roles in the mass organizations hurts the mass organizations and the movement. MIM members have quit leadership positions in many mass organizations. None of the mass organizations collapsed afterwards. On the contrary, in some cases it appears that MIM members held back certain mass organizations because sometimes a year or two after the MIM member quit leadership roles, the ideas that MIM originally espoused become much more widely held within the organization and masses at large. It is very important for radicals and revolutionaries to look out for incipient leaders and to get out of their way.

From this lesson and the lessons of SDS, MIM from its beginning has refused to assume crucial leadership roles in mass organizations. Mass organizations need to exist, but the reformist ones are more effective in these pursuits without communists working from within. Radicals belong in communist-led mass organizations or in a communist party. Revolutionaries should not occupy the time, resources and opportunities of mass organizations except in very special circumstances:

1. When MIM is asked without solicitation to make a presentation on MIM, it might.
2. When MIM sponsors an educational event, demonstration or the like, MIM can go ask for help from a mass organization for that one project taking special care not to eat up too much of the organization's time and making it a point to identify the project as MIM- led so that no question of secret infiltration may arise.
3. MIM members may attend mass organization meetings to inform themselves, but not to attempt to exert political leadership within the meeting.
4. MIM members may join mass organizations and exert leadership within carefully specified and time-limited roles when MIM has made the determination that only a communist will be able to detonate a necessary mass movement. In this case, MIM members must make it clear that they are Maoists as they do their work and seek to get out of a leadership role as soon as the mass movement created generates people who could serve the role of mass organization leaders.

5. MIM members may seek to influence members of mass organizations, but not on the time of the mass organization. In other words: before or after meetings of mass organizations, MIM may talk to members of mass organizations in order to persuade them of the necessity of Maoism.
6. MIM may create groups, such as RAIL and MSG, but it may not deceive the masses about its politics.
7. When MIM is in a position to lead a movement, it might. That will mean using the MIM organization to lead a movement without occupying leadership roles in specific mass organizations. Ultimately, MIM hopes to lead a successful revolution that will involve numerous organizations.

Sources: Black Panthers Speak, *SDS*, "American Leninism," *Weatherman*.

Unite All Who Can Be United: Tactical Alliances with Revisionists or Revisionist-Led Groups?

MIM | August 1998

Most of the people who criticize the Maoist Internationalist Movement's tactical policies on public co-sponsorship of events as "sectarian" do not recognize the ideological differences between MIM and other so-called Marxist groups – or they do not think that ideology matters. But some people, while recognizing these ideological differences, argue that self-identified anti-imperialists should put aside their ideological differences and unite on the political (tactical) plane. These people encourage MIM and the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League (RAIL, a mass organization led by MIM) to join forces with the Gorbachevite Committees of Correspondence (CoC) and groups close to the Trotskyist Workers' World Party (WWP) and crypto-Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP), in order to join together in the fight for "democracy and socialism."

While MIM knows that revolution requires proletarian revolutionaries to "shake hands with the devil" and enter into tactical alliances with representatives of other classes, MIM disagrees with this application of that truth. When we make deals with forces from other classes, we must make sure that we drive hard bargains, and gain at least as much as we give up. The differences between MIM and revisionists like the CoC are not yet crystal clear to the masses, and as Lenin wrote of Russia in 1903, "ideas of party organisation, of party consistency and honour, [and] of the party banner are still so immeasurably weak" here inside u.$. borders. Because of these things tactical unity with revisionists or their front groups will cause more problems in confusing the masses on the need for a party than they solve in gathering supporters to the party's basic goals.[1]

On the surface, it may seem ironic that MIM is more willing to unite tactically with explicitly non-revolutionary groups like the American Friends Service Committee than to unite with so-called "socialist" groups. But the same principle underlies both practices. The party, as the representative of the international proletariat, must maintain its independence and initiative in the united front. The masses can clearly differentiate between MIM and its allies when the allies are non-Marxist, non-revolutionary. But the differences between MIM and

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Revolutionary Youth," Progress Publishers (Moscow), 1970, p. 96.

other so-called Marxists are not so obvious. This is compounded by the fact that the revisionists themselves will take every opportunity to confuse the masses about these differences. Revisionism is always seeking to leech off of the prestige of genuine communist movements.

Why should MIM care if non-Marxists appropriate Marx's name? Because parties represent class interests. MIM represents the interests of the international proletariat; we seek to build a movement led by the ideology of proletarian internationalism. Parties claiming Marxism dress themselves up as representatives of the international proletariat, but represent the interests of the privileged classes. In imperialist countries, many of these revisionist parties actually represent the bloated petit-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy. This is a novelty for our sojourner comrades, since the labor-aristocracy does not play a large or independent role in their societies. But here in the imperialist countries it has done so, repeatedly pulling the anti-imperialist and socialist movement into the swamp of capitulation and reformism.[2] It is MIM's task to remain firm to proletarian principles, and try to pull elements of the labor aristocracy and petit-bourgeoisie from the swamp onto the firm road of anti-imperialist and socialist revolution.

Here's an example of the false logic used by amerikan advocates of "left unity": The CoC promotes tactical "left unity," claiming, "we will have time to settle our other differences under a free, democratic and socialist world." But how do we get to that "free, democratic and socialist world"? MIM argues that the organizations that consistently hold high the banner of revolutionary proletarian internationalism and make the interests of the international proletariat their dividing line will be fit to lead a revolutionary movement into a free, democratic and socialist world. In scrapping the question of whose interests coincide with those of the international proletariat, the CoC line argues for capitulation to the enemy classes.

We cannot win democracy and freedom for the international proletariat by stirring up the reactionary nationalism of the labor aristocracy, or by promoting Gorbachevism and all other kinds of supra-class "humanist" clap-trap like the CoC. Such practices and ideas set the anti-imperialist and socialist revolution back.

For comrades who think that revolutionary or anti-imperialist sentiment alone can unite these disparate groups, we recommend that they read Lenin's article "The Tasks of the Revolutionary Youth." Parties represent classes and so their theory and ideology must be a genuine reflection of people's revolutionary anti-imperialist will and not some shoddy imitation that relies on sentiment and romantic notions of unity. Because the genuine anti-imperialist movement must be led by the international proletariat, it must be led by a party armed with the ideology of the international proletariat: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

[2] See "A Law of Degeneration: Blaming the United Front for Labor-Aristocracy Revisionism," *MIM Theory* 6, pp. 78-81.

Finally, we must recognize that the revisionist parties and their mass organizations are small, and by no means representative of the masses. Indeed, the only thing that could keep MIM and its mass organizations from matching or surpassing their absolute size in short order is an unwillingness to resolutely lead or be self-reliant. False unity with revisionists will halt MIM and RAIL's growth. Genuine unity with the international proletariat will build our work beyond even the dreams of the revisionist capitulators.